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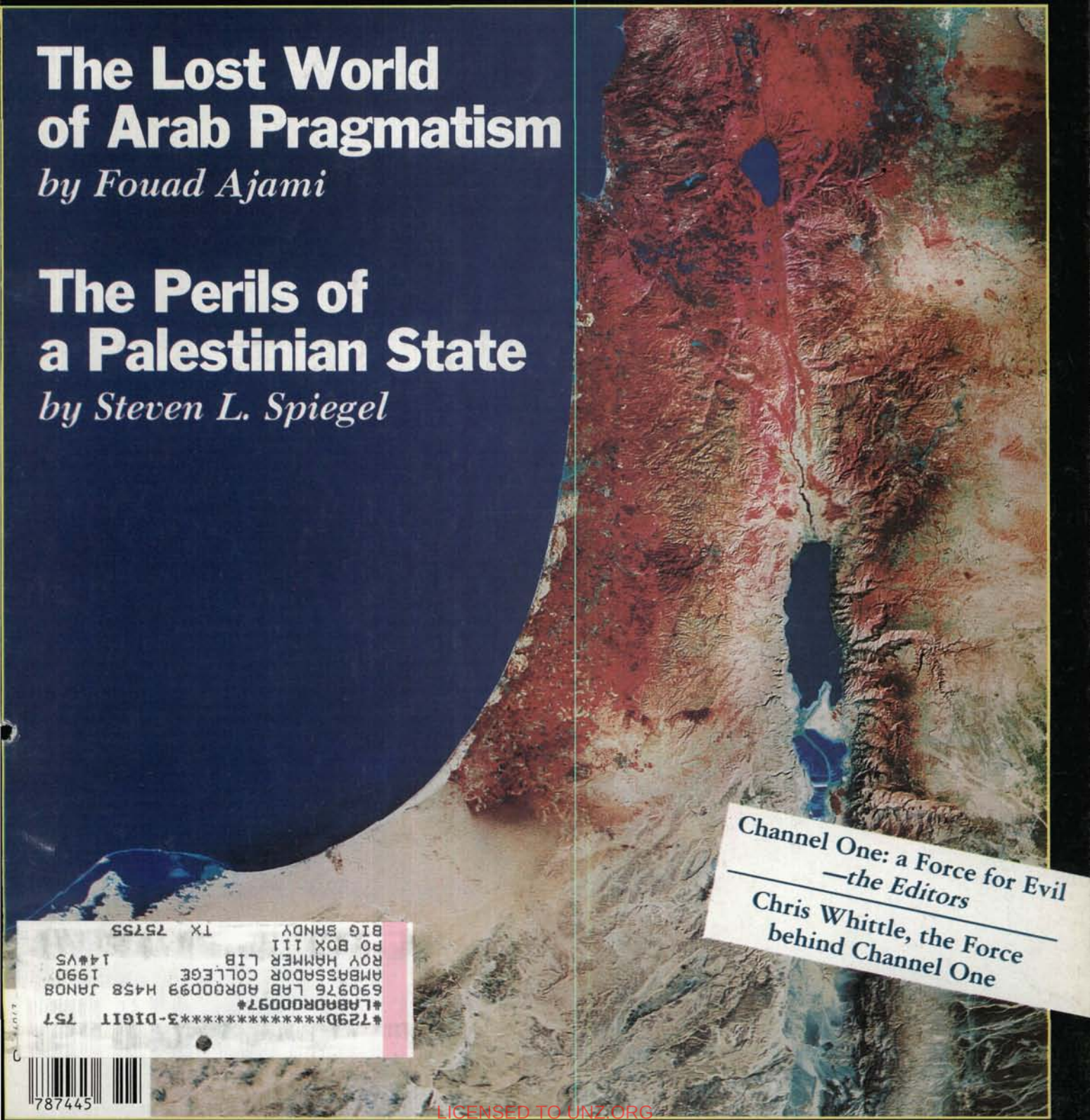

Channel One: a Force for Evil
—the Editors

Chris Whittle, the Force behind Channel One

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APRIL 10, 1989

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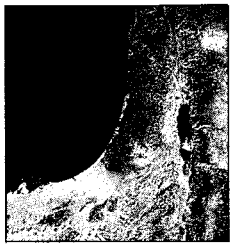

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FROM WASHINGTON

Gub Control

In *Take the Money and Run*, Woody Allen, as bumbling desperado Virgil Starkweather, is told by a bank teller that he'll have to have his robbery note initialed by a loan officer. She insists that the note says, "I have a gub."

Virgil Starkweather isn't the only one with a communications problem where firearms are concerned. There's something about the subject that provokes people to be obtuse. Take, for example, George Bush, widely rumored to be president of the United States (though this could not be confirmed at press time).

At the beginning of this year's round of handwringing about guns—soon after a madman armed with a store-bought semiautomatic assault rifle killed five children and wounded 29 more in a California schoolyard—Bush was asked if maybe it wouldn't be a good idea to do something to cut down on sales of military-type guns to the public.

"No, I'm not about to do that," he said. "And I think the answer is the criminal—do more with the criminal. Not try to—look, the states have a lot of laws on these things. Let them enforce them. It's hard, very hard to do. But that's my position, and I'm not going to change it."

Two months of mayhem later, it became obvious to William J. Bennett, the new director of national drug policy, that this "position" would not do. Accordingly, Bennett formulated a new one. He arranged for a temporary ban on imports of AK-47s, Uzis, and similar drug-dealer favorites. The import ban isn't much by itself—even if made permanent, it would amount to little more than protectionism for the domestic assault rifle industry—but it broaches a thought that is still heretical in the Republican Party and other subsidiaries of the National Rifle Association: that there might possibly be some connection between guns and shootings.

Bush went along with the temporary ban, though he has not quite assimilated the logic behind it. As he put it stirringly, "On the NRA, of which I'm a member—a proud member, I might add—I believe that we can find accommodation between the legitimate interests of the sportsman and the interest of the police chiefs in protecting their people who put their lives on the line every single day." For Bush, apparently, these "interests" have an equal moral claim. But the fact that he admits they may be in conflict must be counted as progress.

Hard-core gun advocates are not so mealymouthed. They are also capable of a certain zaniness, as I discovered a week or so ago when I went to hear Joe Foss, president of the NRA (and therefore, in a small way, president of George Bush), at the National Press Club.

Joe Foss is a friendly, rugged old guy with a fine head of wavy gray hair. He wears a Western-style string tie. A flying ace in World War II, he won the Congressional Medal of Honor. Later he served two terms as governor of South Dakota and one as commissioner of the American Football League. He's quite a character. I wish I had the space to print everything he said. A couple of samples will have to suffice to give the flavor.

Joe Foss was asked how, given that many more gun owners kill themselves or their relatives than ever shoot an intruder, he could in good conscience advise people to own guns. Here, in full, is what he said:

"It's very easy to do that in good conscience, because we've got a great training program. When you buy the gun, don't just run home and hide it in the drawer loaded. Get the instruction on how to use it. And, of course, if you have children around, you never have the ammunition and the gun together unless you know that you're going to use it. See, we don't police our homes any more as a family unit. We run off like goofy geese and let the silly box be the baby sitter. That's where the kids really go wild—when you look at that thing and see the blow-'em-up and shoot-'em-up, even for breakfast. Yesterday morning I was watching TV, and they had a show on there. It was pow! pow! pow!—for breakfast! So no matter when the kid looks at it, he gets the general idea you oughta shoot somebody. It's time in our great country that some of the parents take the responsibility of taking care of their kids."

A questioner mentioned the "well-regulated militia" clause of the Second Amendment, and asked if it did not imply that "the right of the people to keep and bear arms" comes with some responsibility to serve the country.

Joe Foss replied, "No, sir, you're dead wrong on that baby! There's one thing

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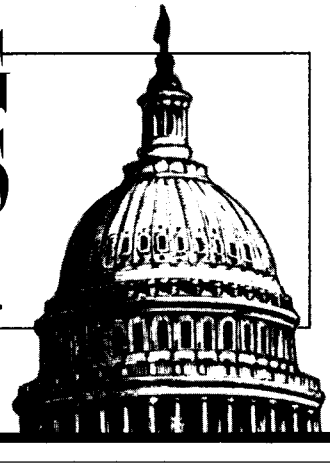

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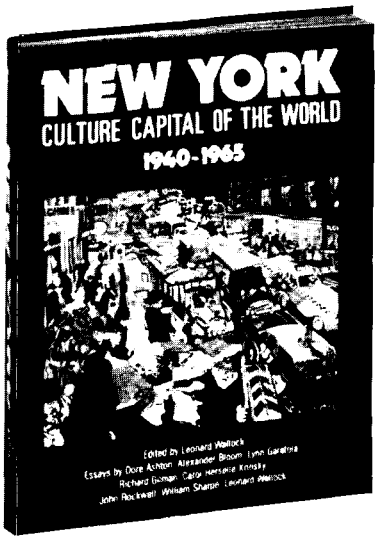

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CORRESPONDENCE

The Rushdie Affair

To the editors:

In your commentary on the Salman Rushdie affair ("Two Cheers for Blasphemy," March 13), your editorialist refers to "a prominent book critic for a large metropolitan newspaper" who allegedly refused to review *John Dollar*, the novel by Rushdie's wife, Marianne Wiggins, because he feared "a favorable review might make him a target" of the Ayatollah's thugs. Judging from calls that both he and I received from reporters at other publications, Jonathan Yardley of the *Washington Post Book World* is the book critic thus described. The allegation, however, is totally false. Yardley was never scheduled to review Wiggins's book. The book was assigned from the start to another *Post* staffer, Michael Dirda, whose favorable review appeared in *Book World* on Sunday, February 26.

I'm not sure how this rumor started; given Yardley's reputation for outspokenness and integrity, it seems patently absurd. Surely THE NEW REPUBLIC's editorialist, like other journalists who heard this rumor, had the obligation to check it. But neither Yardley nor I heard from anyone there.

As your editorial points out, the Rushdie affair has enormous implications for everyone who cares about our most basic freedoms. Our energies should be expended in support of Rushdie and the principles involved, rather than in self-righteous posturing about who spoke out first and how strongly. A little fact-checking wouldn't hurt either.

NINA KING
Editor, Book World
Washington Post
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

You comment in "Two Cheers for Blasphemy," in regard to a piece I wrote for the *Washington Post* on the domestic politics of the Salman Rushdie affair in Iran, that the political explanation is "too forgetting" and that it diminishes "an epochal struggle between ideals of human life to . . . inside baseball." But that is to criticize my article for not touching on issues it never set out to address in the first place. The recent infighting and antics of Iran's clerical factions, the crude attempts to reignite revolutionary fervor among a generally indifferent public, and the scramble to salvage something of Iran's diplomatic standing abroad surely bear out my contention that, in Iran at least, there is something makeshift about the Rushdie crisis and that domestic politics are as much an issue as the religious offense caused by Rushdie's book.

I share your moral outrage and that of numerous authors and writers at the threat to the freedom of speech and the simple right to life posed by Khomeini's attack on Rushdie. I simply find it odd and disconcerting that similar moral outrage was not expressed, or an "epochal struggle" regarding fundamental values invoked, when the Khomeini regime executed well over 1,000 political prisoners, many of them very young, in just the last six or seven months; or when the government of Iraq used poison gas to kill thousands of its own Kurdish citizens last year. Perhaps we are to regard these instances of brutality, directed merely at Iranians and Iraqis, as simply a case of "We have politics; they have politics" that, in the Rushdie case, you so eloquently condemn.

SHAUL BAKHASH
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

You're right that Waldenbooks and B. Dalton were cowardly in not carrying the Salman Rushdie book, but if you reread Henry Fairlie's article on the excesses in liability suits ("Fear of Living," January 23), you should see this in a different light. American companies are not allowed to be brave; if they are brave they are sued. If a crazed Muslim threw just a smoke bomb in a mall bookstore, several customers would file million dollar suits for mental anguish. Already there are suits against Pan Am for not closing down after vague terrorist threats. This attitude not only makes our companies cowardly, it makes us a cowardly nation. We will never stand up to terrorism.

ROBERT ABBOTT
New York, New York

Scorched Redneck

To the editors:

I enjoyed much of Eugene Genovese's review of V. S. Naipaul's *A Turn in the South* ("They'll Take Their Stand," February 13). Unfortunately, they both perpetuate a really terrible myth when they write that Southern "redneck" whites' don't-mess-with-me mentality reflects "admirable assurance of who they are," etc. That's plain crazy. It is about as far from healthy self-esteem as you can get. What "redneck" hatred actually represents is self-contempt, fear, and insecurity. Hard to fathom, I know, with all

continued on page 42

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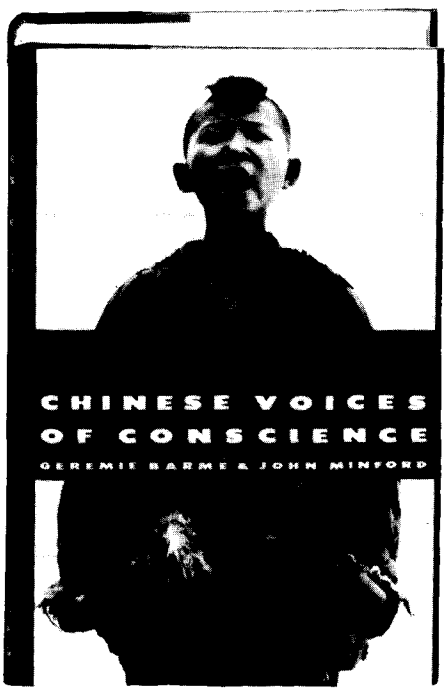

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
APRIL 10, 1989

SCHOOL DAZE

Channel One—the news show that Whittle Communications is beaming into a few high schools on a test basis—has a major public relations problem. Short of offering students free vials of crack as a reward for good grades, few innovations would be more certain to rile cranky educators. For one thing, Channel One comes via TV, the great enemy of adolescent literacy. For another, it carries commercials for high-priced jeans and other status symbols, the great enemies of long adolescent attention spans. Also, Channel One features young, hip, vacuous-looking anchorpersons and has a rapid-fire visual format that suggests (and often delivers) superficial content.

But the project does have one strong selling point: at a time when money for education is hard to come by, Channel One doesn't consume any. On the contrary: each school gets $50,000 worth of communications equipment—satellite dish, TV, VCR—as well as the news program itself (which arguably is not quite as terrible as it might have been). All the school has to do in return is make sure kids sit through the 12-minute news segment—including two minutes of commercials—each day. These attractive financing terms explain why a few credible observers, including the *New York Times*, have defended Channel One, asking that we at least wait until the end of its seven-week test before condemning it.

Sorry, but we'd rather not. The reason isn't so much the criticisms being leveled at Channel One (although some of them do have merit) as the defenses of it. They are a testament to the sorry state of educational funding in America, a problem that enterprises like Channel One probably won't help and may well aggravate.

The cheapest shot being directed at Channel One is the assertion of guilt by association with television. There's nothing wrong with using TV educationally, so long as it works, and current events is probably better suited to the medium than most subjects. The commercials, though, are another matter. We'll spare you the moralizing about the various objectionable values that might receive official sanction from commercials in school. In more practical terms, it's simply hard to justify spending valuable school time (the electricity bill is running, the teachers' salary meter is running) persuading kids to buy a particular product—especially when the product is, say, a candy bar, and especially when the cost in time is so high: one minute of commercials for every five minutes of education. (We don't want to sound too puritanical, but one pairing of commercials on Channel One is worth describing. One ad, from the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, warns kids not to fool around with drugs. The other bills a Snickers bar—sugar, caffeine and other cocoa-based stimulants—as a quick pick-me-up that aids late-night studying: "I can eat a Snickers and then I can concentrate," says the student in the commercial. "It feels . . . *good*.")

There is a larger issue here that has generally been obscured in the debates over Channel One: Where should control over information entering the schools reside? In effect, Whittle Communications is paying schools to accept a current events curriculum (complete with recommended reading, glossary, etc.) of Whittle's designing. Granted, Whittle is hardly abusing the privilege. If anything, Channel One tries so hard to sidestep bias that it has avoided putting much substance of any kind into the program. But the point is one of principle: the single criterion for determining what information enters the schools has generally been, in theory, what is good for the intellectual and moral development of children, as judged by public officials and teachers, not by the highest bidder. There have been a few departures from that rule—science extravaganzas sponsored by chemical companies, plastic rulers that say "Coca-Cola"—but none so large as Channel One. Before taking such a big step across this line, we should ask whether the benefits outweigh the perils.

The reason this question is pressing is that Channel One is an extremely clever idea, and if successful can be expected to proliferate in various forms. Textbooks could be paid for with advertising; school walls could be filled with "educational" billboards. And commercially sponsored TV shows on science, history, and literature are naturals. Perhaps state and local boards of review could keep the junkiest of these out of the schools, but officials would probably end up abdicating in some measure their duty to design the best curriculum available.

The reasons so many public schools find themselves in the sort of financial straits that make commercial sponsorship attractive are many, but two stand out. First, of course, there just aren't enough tax dollars to

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provide the kind of education we'd like to see—any more than there are enough tax dollars to provide the kind of defense we'd like to see. Second, and more important, is the U.S. system of financing schools, which relies only slightly on federal funding and very largely on state revenues and local property taxes. This dependence on the local economic base often—depending on the socioeconomic diversity of the school district—condemns children of the poor to a relatively bad education and thus makes a mockery of phrases like "the American Dream" and "equal opportunity."

There has been much improvement on this front. In the 1945-46 school year, 64 percent of educational funding came from the local level, 35 percent from the state, and virtually none from the federal. By 1980-81, the figures were 43 percent, 47 percent, and nine percent. The Reagan years have retarded this wholesome trend, but the damage probably isn't permanent. Still, the remaining, quite substantial, inequality of public education is more disturbing now that a distinct culture of poverty has emerged in some cities. And what's more, this inequality is reinforced by that culture; inner-city schools, deprived not only of money but increasingly of concerned, well-informed parents, can decay rapidly.

It would be great to find a miracle cure for educational inequality, and several have been suggested, but so far none looks like it will do the trick. First there's the voucher system, which would let parents use government money to "buy" the best education available, thus putting public schools in healthy competition with private schools. At root, this is a pernicious idea that would slowly shrink the role of public education, thus relieving the affluent of much of the tax burden that now goes toward the education of the masses. Another approach is "magnet schools," a somewhat less bad but still problematic idea. By giving parents the choice of several district schools, this system is supposed to infuse public school principals and teachers with competitive spirit. But it can also leave children of ignorant, apathetic parents (the children born into the culture of poverty, that is) worse off than ever, stuck in deteriorating schools that everyone else is deserting.

The trouble with education-by-commercial-sponsor is that, like the other miracle cures, it would probably end up aggravating inequality of education. Any designer jeans maker in its right mind is going to be more interested in sponsoring programs at Beverly Hills High than at a school in Harlem or the South Side of Chicago. Defenders of Channel One might reply that poor kids are in fact attractive commercial targets—that rather than save what little money they have, they spend it at McDonald's, on Snickers, on Nike Air Jordans. And maybe that's true. But if so it only raises again the original question, in a more troubling context: Is this the sort of behavior that school time should be used to encourage?

If Whittle Communications is really interested, as it claims, in performing a public service, then it can relax: its mission is accomplished. It has reminded us that education is not only underfunded, but inequitably funded. And it has reminded us that the problem can't be solved with smoke and mirrors. Only a slow, painful redirection of government resources—and not that alone—will do the trick.

NOTEBOOK

REDESIGN UPDATE: We have received more than a few letters containing, shall we say, constructive criticism regarding TNR's new look. (So far, the most pungent characterization of the redesigned magazine is that it looks like a cross between a ransom note and a 1950s edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica.) Rest assured that we are listening, and fiddling accordingly. For example, have you noticed that the "Books & The Arts" logo (on page 22 of this issue) is no longer the size of a Stop sign? Several readers have complained that the new TNR is slightly less readable than the old, and we'll be experimenting on that front shortly. We're considering, for example, putting more space between lines, and/or putting a hair's more space between letters. Stay tuned. And keep those cards and letters coming. We can take it.

The immigration dilemma.

BORDERLINE CASES

By Morton M. Kondracke

One of the most valuable commodities in the world is the chance to live in the United States. You can tell by the demand. In 1986 Congress approved a two-year lottery for 10,000 additional immigration visas; 1.5 million people applied. Last year Congress extended the lottery through 1991 and opened 50,000 more spaces; now there are eight million applicants. This procedure is distinct from the normal legal entry process, under which 500,000 persons entered the United States last year and for which there is a backlog of about two million. For a Mexican or Filipino applicant who's the brother or sister of a U.S. citizen, the wait can be 20 years.

An additional 120,000 persons will enter the United States this year as political refugees. And, of course, the United States is nowhere near stopping illegal immigration. The Border Patrol apprehends 900,000 would-be illegal entrants per year, down about 800,000 from the level before Congress passed the 1986 employer-sanctions law designed to discourage illegal immigration. This law's amnesty provision also granted legal status to three million formerly illegal aliens and agricultural workers. As they become permanent residents and then naturalized citizens, their relatives will swell the rolls of those waiting for legal entry, and many will probably enter the United States illegally during the wait.

This ever-rising tide of would-be Americans ought to be gratifying to those of us who were born here. But it

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also presents us with an agonizing problem: How many immigrants—and what kind of immigrants—should we let in?

These are questions that Congress and the Bush administration are about to visit again. The administration's answers depend on whether President Bush decides to retain the Reagan administration's hard-nosed commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Alan Nelson. His keep-'em-out stance has raised the morale of his enforcement-minded agency, but has blemished America's record for compassion. Last year, for example, when the Soviet Union responded to years of U.S. pressure and began allowing its Jews to emigrate, INS wanted to stop considering them refugees; it was only under pressure from the U.S. Jewish community that the Reagan administration made an adequate number of visas available, and it had to take them away from Indochinese refugees waiting in squalid camps in Thailand.

As documented by Doug Bandow in the *Wall Street Journal* on February 13, the INS routinely rejects refugees from Haiti and El Salvador—regarding them as fleeing economic hardship, not political repression—and is stingy in granting asylum even to persons fleeing Nicaragua, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and Czechoslovakia. Nelson also is responsible for a recent crackdown on Central American refugees, and for the proposal to build a ditch along a piece of the U.S.-Mexican border in what surely will be a vain effort to keep out aliens and drugs.

Attorney General Richard Thornburgh reportedly wants Nelson out. But Nelson has a strong advocate in Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming, one of Bush's closest personal friends. Although Simpson is considered a "restrictionist" on immigration, under his major legislative proposal the United States still would take in more immigrants per year—590,000, not counting refugees—than all other countries combined. Still, Simpson's adversaries in the immigration wars—the "inclusionists," including representatives of Asian, Hispanic, and other ethnic groups—are worried about the precedent of setting a cap on immigration, which might be lowered in future years.

There is idealism, but also some nastiness, on both sides of this fight. Patrick Burns, a spokesman for the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), the main restrictionist lobbying group, argues that in an era of budget constraints, social spending should be directed primarily to America's native poverty population, not to helping foreigners. He charges that Hispanic, Asian, union, and black civil rights leaders (Jesse Jackson, for one) want to open the borders for political reasons (Hispanics and Asians overwhelmingly vote Democratic) and in the process are betraying their constituents, who will lose jobs and government services and have their wages depressed by immigrants. (Indeed, the biggest fans of cheap wages—the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, etc.—are part of the inclusionist camp.)

The basic case made by the inclusionists, though, is that expanded immigration swells the number of consumers in America and creates jobs. Demographer Ben Wattenberg claims that, with its birthrate falling, the United States will need more young workers to pay the retirement benefits of an aging population. Studies by the Urban Institute and the RAND Corporation seem to show that immigrants do not increase unemployment and that, to the extent they lower wage rates, they make American companies more competitive and prevent them from moving their plants to foreign countries. Inclusionists persuasively argue that immigration is a source of fresh ideas and eager workers.

But immigration's impact depends a lot on what kind of immigrants are admitted. Under current law, immediate relatives (spouses and unmarried children) of U.S. citizens are automatically let in—about 230,000 last year—while a system of preferences pertains to others seeking entry. Last year 270,000 such persons entered—216,000 of them more distant relatives of U.S. citizens or permanent residents, plus 54,000 under categories reserved for persons (and their families) with special skills or requested by specific employers.

A welcome consensus has developed in Congress that more highly skilled and professional immigrants need to be admitted. Even Senator Edward Kennedy, one-time leader of the inclusionists, co-sponsored Simpson's legislation to cap legal immigration, to shift its emphasis from reunifying families to admitting those who possess an education, occupational skills, and English proficiency, and to admit a greater percentage of Europeans. In 1986 only four percent of all legal immigrants were admitted on the basis of their occupational skills—and this tiny number provided 52 percent of the mathematicians and computer scientists who came in and 38 percent of the college teachers.

The question Congress will be fighting over is whether to admit skilled persons instead of or in addition to family members. Kennedy-Simpson would reduce family admissions somewhat, and for the first time pit immediate relatives of citizens against all other relatives for immigration slots. It would also eliminate the preference granted to married brothers and sisters of U.S. residents and increase the skills-and-education category of immigrants to 120,000. Of these, 55,000 would be admitted as "independent immigrants" according to a point system based on skills, education, and English proficiency. Critics contend English is favored as Kennedy's means of admitting more Irish, who have lost out to Asians and Latins in the family-unification sweepstakes under current law.

The inclusionist alternative to Kennedy-Simpson is a measure sponsored in the House by liberal Democrat Howard Berman of California and in the Senate by Paul Simon of Illinois. Berman's bill would create a similar number of skilled-immigrant slots as Kennedy-Simpson, but expand openings for family members by granting the same unlimited entry rights to immediate families of resident aliens as current law allows for spouses and children of U.S. citizens. Berman says this provision is designed to help those legalized under the 1987 amnesty law. Restrictionists claim the bill would create a "chain reaction," swelling immigration by hundreds of thousands per year, and would mainly benefit Asians and Hispanics, two California Democratic constituencies.

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Last year Kennedy-Simpson passed the Senate overwhelmingly, but no legislation was enacted by the House. This year the Senate will probably act first again, and again House prospects are murky—the more so because a Texan of indeterminate immigration views, Jack Brooks, has taken over for inclusionist liberal Peter Rodino as chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. Ideally, a compromise could be reached that would leave current family-unification limits in place and greatly expand the number of skilled immigrants admitted each year. Such a plan is being drafted by Representative Charles Schumer of New York. Were it to pass, it's likely the United States would be accused of sponsoring a "brain drain" in foreign countries. We would be doing just that, but then that is what we have always done—act as a magnet for talented people who come here out of their own free choice. Right now, lagging behind our competitors as we are, we need more such people—lots more.

Race and politics in Chicago.

SKIN DEEP

By Fred Barnes

Chicago

John Johnson, 71, is the publisher of *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines, a black magnate and one of the wealthiest men in Chicago. As a friend of the Daley family, he agreed to host a breakfast in his home on March 20 at which Ron Brown, the new Democratic national chairman, would speak. The event was supposed to boost Richard M. Daley, the Democratic nominee for mayor and son of former Mayor Richard J. Daley, who died in 1977. Invitations in Johnson's name went out to prominent Chicago blacks, and soon word of the breakfast leaked. Six days before the event, Johnson was bitterly attacked on black radio stations (including one he owns) as a traitor for supporting a white candidate. A boycott of his magazines was threatened. "The nerve of this man to play around with Daley when he has become a millionaire off black people," Conrad Worrill, chairman of the Black United Front, griped to the *Chicago Tribune*. Johnson was shaken. He begged out of the breakfast. And the afternoon following the attacks, he showed up at a press conference with Tim Evans, Daley's black independent opponent in the mayoral election. He presented Evans with a $25,000 check and his blessing.

In Chicago, race isn't the most important thing in the campaign for mayor. It's the only thing. In the Democratic primary on February 28, an exit poll by WBBM-TV found that Mayor Eugene Sawyer, who is black, got only eight percent of the white vote, an amazingly low figure for an incumbent who was hoisted into office (when Mayor Harold Washington died in 1987) chiefly by whites on the City Council. Daley got only six percent of the black vote. In the general election on April 4, polls show Evans drawing about four percent of the white vote, Daley only a slightly higher percent of blacks. If this trend persists, as nearly everyone here expects, Daley will win handily because there are more white than black voters. Chicago is 42 percent white, 41 percent black, and 14 percent Hispanic. That's by population. In voter registration, the city is 50 percent white, 42 percent black, eight percent Hispanic.

What makes the stark polarization surprising is that racial tension has ebbed perceptibly since 1983, when Washington became Chicago's first black mayor. The Johnson case is an exception; overt racial feelings have rarely dominated the campaign discourse. Nor have there been many racially motivated attacks. Still, "the voting [on April 4] is going to be completely racial," says Don Rose, the white liberal who engineered Jane Byrne's successful bid for mayor in 1979 and now runs the Evans campaign. "Chicago is beyond the point where either side needs to use racial language to remind people." Rose says his rule of thumb is that "80 percent of the white vote is race-driven and 85 to 90 percent of the black vote is race-driven." Daley strategists agree.

Most of those who've raised the race issue publicly have tried to bludgeon Daley with it. In February, Representative Gus Savage called Daley "a born and bred racist. . . . Born in a racist neighborhood, attended a racist school, born of racist parents, married in a lily-white church, and probably will be buried in a lily-white cemetery." Later, Savage zinged Brown as an "oreo" for coming to Chicago on Daley's behalf. Rose says Savage is now "muzzled." Thomas Todd, a former assistant U.S. attorney, called Daley a "smoke and mirror racist." Daley has used his office as state's attorney since 1980 to "work against blacks and to protect his political cronies and abuse the black community."

Daley has avoided racial references, except to say, as he did at a Labor for Daley rally on March 20, that he wants to "reach out to the black community, the white community, the Asian community, the Hispanic community." David Axelrod, Daley's media consultant, says, "People in Chicago are tired of the politics of racial confrontation." Daley aides fretted that Evans would be jeered or pelted when he participated in the St. Patrick's Day parade. Evans was merely snubbed. Sawyer was lauded by the public address announcer when he came to the reviewing stand. A few days before, Sawyer had declared himself neutral in the Daley-Evans contest, which helps Daley by depriving Evans of unified black support.

Daley made one slip that engulfed him in a controversy over racial rhetoric. To a white audience just before the primary, he said what sounded like "You want a white mayor who can sit down with everybody." He insists he lost his place in his standard stump speech and mumbled the word "what," not "white." In any case, he was formally condemned by the self-appointed Committee on Decent Unbiased Campaign Tactics. The group wants to stifle racial language in the campaign, but the effect of its censure of Daley was to give his alleged remark more attention. Sawyer briefly tried to exploit the matter, saying he was "shocked." He also

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accused Daley of hiring few black lawyers in the state attorney's office, of not pursuing rape cases aggressively when the victims were black, and of systematically attempting to keep blacks off criminal juries. Not surprisingly, Daley denied all charges.

The problem for Evans is the same that bedeviled Sawyer, who lost to Daley by 56 percent to 43 percent. Unless he can cut into Daley's whopping majorities among white and Hispanic voters, or turn out hordes of voters who skipped the primary, Evans is doomed. In 1983 and 1987, Washington got about 20 percent of the white vote and a majority of the Hispanic vote. But white liberals, many of them Jewish, are cool to both Sawyer and Evans. And Daley has courted them avidly. Besides, his mushy campaign talk is vaguely liberal. "We want a government that looks into the eyes of children all over this city and says, 'Yes, you have dreams. Keep those dreams going,' " he told the labor rally.

William Singer, a reform-minded liberal who ran against Mayor Daley in 1975, says a series of "seminal events" soured whites on Sawyer and Evans. Whites were upset when black City Council members demanded that a black succeed Washington "not as a matter of fairness but of divine right." Then came the case of Steve Cokely, a Sawyer aide who attacked whites and Jews in speeches and claimed Jewish doctors were infecting black babies with AIDS. Sawyer delayed for five days before firing him. Evans was no quicker in urging Cokely's firing. Daley instantly urged Cokely's ouster. Novelist Saul Bellow cited this in endorsing Daley. "I was especially struck by his courage in standing up in the matter of Mr. Cokely," he said.

Next came the furor over a painting at the Art Institute of Chicago depicting Harold Washington in bra and panties. Three black aldermen marched into the museum and took the painting down. "That offended people as much as the Cokely thing," says Singer. As for Hispanics, their ties to black politicians were never more than tenuous. According to one exit poll, Daley got 74 percent of the Hispanic vote in the primary.

The inability of either Sawyer or Evans to attract Hispanics is a blow to Jesse Jackson. One of many he has suffered in the mayoral campaign. There's no rainbow coalition in Chicago. Ever since Washington's death, Jackson has run into trouble. He tried to get Evans anointed as interim mayor, and failed. Then he backed Sawyer in the primary, but couldn't get Evans to endorse Sawyer. The day before the primary, Jackson went to Evans headquarters and made a face-to-face appeal for a last-minute endorsement. Evans refused. Jackson is backing Evans in the general election anyway. Daley Democrats have pounded him for rejecting the party's nominee. Jackson says, correctly, that his accusers are hypocrites because they backed an independent against Washington, the party nominee, in 1987. Daley backed the independent, too, but he hasn't criticized Jackson on this point.

Fresh exposure of Jackson's political weakness at home, though, is not the most important feature of the campaign. Donald Haider, the Republican mayoral candidate in 1987, says the Chicago election is "nationally significant." For once, low turnout—in the primary down to 64 percent of registered voters, from 82 percent in 1983 and 74 percent in 1987—and general voter apathy are good signs. Assuming Daley wins, these show that a polarized city can exchange a black mayor for a white one with minimal racial turmoil. My guess is Chicago will have a black mayor again, maybe in the 1990s. All that's needed is a black candidate with appeal to white voters and the ability to get John Johnson's endorsement without mau-mauing him into it.

William Randolph Hearst Lite.

CITIZEN CHRIS

By Michael Newman

Christopher Whittle doesn't publish the kind of magazines you can't wait to read. He publishes the kind of magazines you *have* to wait to read. Among the 42 "media properties" of Whittle Communications are *Southern Style*, a magazine for women sitting in the beauty parlor awaiting their appointments; *Funnies*, a poster (or "magazine on a wall") with jokes and comics, conveniently placed in laundromats for people waiting for their wash to dry; *Road Trips*, a travel poster displayed in garages for motorists to read while their cars are getting fixed; and *Special Reports*, six different single-topic magazines ("On Health," "On Sports," etc.) placed in doctors' waiting rooms. Perhaps Whittle's most inspired idea yet for reaching a captive, bored audience is Channel One, his controversial news show for high school students. In exchange for $50,000 of equipment—televisions, VCRs, satellite dishes—participating schools agree to make students watch the 12-minute program, including two minutes of commercials. If Channel One clicks, Whittle Communications' annual revenues could go from $105 million to more than twice that in short order.

There's only one Whittle product—*Tennessee Illustrated*—that's actually available on a newsstand, where anyone might happen upon it (and where everyone has the option of walking away from it). It's also the only Whittle magazine that features Chris Whittle's "Editor's Notes," nicely illustrated with a color photo of the author. And it's the only one that says "Whittle Communications" on the cover. Why is *Tennessee Illustrated* so different? One answer is that Whittle grew up in Tennessee and bases his company there. Another is that he plans to enter Tennessee politics. "When I start approaching 50," the 41-year-old Whittle said last year, "I'll run for office." People who know him say he'll run for governor, probably in 1994—though a shot at the Senate is possible if a spot opens up.

The weird thing about Chris Whittle's plan to enter politics is the record he's got to run on. You might hope that a publishing magnate who wants to be governor would have left voters some basis for evaluating him: a

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crusading newspaper, say, or an ideologically distinctive magazine. But Whittle has never started periodicals of much political or intellectual consequence. Political magazines, he says, are "a bad business." And the one magazine of some intellectual import that he bought—*Esquire*—had less import, if more money, by the time he left it seven years later. The closest thing Whittle has to a journalistic accomplishment that he might someday brag to voters about are apple-pie public service articles that provide useful information or laud do-gooders.

Since Whittle has left few written clues as to what kind of politician he would make, I tried to pin him down on the subject recently. It didn't work. We were sitting in a Capitol Hill restaurant. He wore a purple polka-dot bow tie and a gray flannel suit with wisps of purple. His hair was tousled—carefully tousled, as if by a hair-tousling consultant. The conversation—an embarrassment to both of us, in retrospect—went like this:

ME: What about, uhh, to get back to politics, what about politically? Do you have a politician you admire?

HIM: I have a lot of politicians I admire. . . . *(Laughter. Long pause. Waiter brings coffee.)* Ummm . . . Are we still on that question? You didn't forget it? I was hoping that during that coffee break . . .

ME: Nope.

HIM: Um . . . No, I'm happy to run through a quick list. . . .

ME: I mean, they can be, ahh, dead politicians, if it's easier.

HIM: Oh no. No. Um . . . Martin Luther King. I don't know if you view him as a politician, but there's . . . I mean you could argue that he was an enormous innovator in his field of work, and had a major impact. *(Pause.)* Um, Kennedy—if he lived—John. His kind of use of symbols, I think, was, um, powerful. *(Pause.)* Um, in an interesting way, Reagan, in his discipline. He had—some people would argue a vague notion—but he had a notion, and he stuck with it. And I found, I found that powerful and worthwhile. . . . And—and you can pull from a lot of different people—

ME: Right. Ah, I mean, ahhh, what would be your political philosophy, I guess, if you had to give it in one or two sentences?

HIM: Emerging. *(Laughter.)* In a word. . . .

ME: Um, do you consider yourself a Republican or a Democrat?

HIM: I, ahh . . .

ME: I mean, are you registered as either?

HIM: One of the things I'm trying to do, one of the reasons I'm trying to do it, is I don't want to be highly partisan—because of the business I'm in? And I'm going to remain that way—meaning non-partisan—for a long time.

ME: But, I mean, membership in a party doesn't necessarily mean you're ardently—

HIM: Yeah. I'm not a member of either party.

ME: Can I ask who you voted for in the, the 1988 elections?

HIM: Secret ballot. . . . And, I mean, I've voted for Democrats and I've voted for Republicans, and I'm sure I'll continue to, and I'm not going to be highly partisan.

Whittle first gained prominence in 1979 when his company, then a partnership with Philip Moffitt called 13-30 (for the age group their magazines aimed at), bought *Esquire*, which was losing $100,000 per week. The story of how Whittle and Moffitt resuscitated *Esquire* has taken on mythic dimensions—at least when Whittle has talked about it. "We were this close to going under. Then we figured out a way to raise more money, and for four-and-a-half years, we bled terribly to fix that magazine. But we finally fixed it. And the reason was that, even though we'd gone through all our funds, we still believed. . . . You have to believe that what you're doing is good, makes sense to people and provides some service." A company press release was more succinct. *Esquire* survived, it explained, after being "repositioned as a lifestyle guidebook for affluent males between the ages of 25 and 45."

Among the standard complaints about *Esquire* under Whittle is the editorial price paid for this repositioning. Critics say the magazine catered increasingly to the culture of narcissism, with more articles on looking good, feeling good, and spending well—nice companions to advertisements on the same subjects. Indeed, this is the standard complaint about Whittle publications generally: they're nothing but advertising vehicles.

Of course, advertising is always the engine that drives journalism, and compromises of the journalistic vision are a fact of life. But at least some magazines have a journalistic vision to be compromised. Whittle's publications, in contrast, are conceived as follows: find a deep-pocketed company; find a well-defined (preferably captive) audience that the company wants to reach; then figure out what kind of stories you could run that would, if not actually attract this audience, at least not send it scurrying for the door. For Whittle, editorial content is something you wrap around advertising to make it presentable. He hasn't just compromised the ideal relationship between journalism and advertising, as most magazines do; he has completely inverted it.

There's no denying that Whittle has been an innovator. He got rich on "single-sponsor vehicles"—magazines devoted to a single advertiser—and then branched out into "product exclusivity," which is found in *Special Reports* and *Tennessee Illustrated*. Neither magazine runs ads for more than one product in any given category (only Purina dog food, only Dial soap, etc.)

Special Reports, now the closest thing to the company's flagship, was trumpeted by Whittle as "the most successful magazine launch in history" when introduced last fall. It is also the only magazine in memory whose marketing strategy entailed actively preventing readers from encountering competing magazines. In order to receive the six quarterly magazines (plus a "handsome oak cabinet" in which to put them), doctors had to agree to keep their waiting rooms free of all but two other magazines. Rival publishers called this un-American. "Yes I'm pissed off," says Owen Lipstein, publisher of *American Health*. "Clearly we're competitors. But I think the issue goes deeper than that." Time Inc., too, thought the issue went deep, and was reportedly considering a lawsuit. But then it decided to beat Whittle by

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buying him; it acquired 50 percent of Whittle Communications last fall. Now *Time* Editor in Chief Jason McManus has no harsh words for Whittle products, though mustering superlatives still takes effort. "They're wonderful," he told a writer for the *New York Times Magazine*, brandishing a handsome handful. "Well, not wonderful—very impressive."

Whittle is mounting an all-out battle on behalf of Channel One. Against a rising tide of opposition—the National Parent-Teacher Association, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the American Federation of Teachers—Whittle has defended himself ubiquitously: over the airwaves, on the op-ed page, in advertisements. He has put more emphasis on how badly America's children need Channel One than on the tons of cash he stands to make if it flies. In the *New York Times*, he wrote that "the program will be the only source of daily news for many students."

This is not good news. Describing Channel One—as it has been described—as a cross between MTV and "Good Morning America" is being charitable. Its news stories are narrated by young, attractive, stylishly groomed anchors who look as if they don't quite understand themselves what they're talking about. And it's not clear that anyone else will. The lead stories last about 20 seconds and are subdivided into lots of fleeting visual fragments.

If Channel One succeeds, and its critics are won over, Whittle stands to gain not only a fortune, but the credential for public office that he now lacks. Whittle Communications bills itself as "a large educational publisher," in the words of Editor in Chief William Rukeyser. (Whittle's first magazine was for college students, and six Whittle publications, two of them posters, are available in schools.) You can almost see the campaign brochures now: Chris Whittle wants to be the Education Governor.

Most observers agree that when the time comes, Whittle will go Republican. His public relations firm, the Ingram Group, is a Republican outfit, started by the man who ran the successful Tennessee gubernatorial campaign of Lamar Alexander in 1980. Ten years earlier Whittle himself served as campaign manager for Republican gubernatorial candidate Wally Barnes of Connecticut. Now that Whittle's party affiliation is essentially chosen, all he needs is someone who can explain to him why he chose it. But that's under control: Whittle's taking classes—private tutorials, actually—at Vanderbilt's Institute for Public Policy Studies and Harvard's Kennedy School.

Maybe he'll emerge from these courses with the faith in the power of ideas that some journalists have, but that Whittle's journals never reflect. Then again, maybe not. During our interview, I asked him how *Tennessee Illustrated* figured into his political future. After successfully evading my question, he mentioned that the magazine was losing money. How long will you continue to publish it, I asked, if it's losing money? "As long as we keep believing in it." And how long will you keep believing in it? "I hope we don't stop believing in it." But isn't belief something you can control yourself? "Actually, it's not something you can control yourself. The market reality controls it. . . . Believe in it and it exists? Not quite."

The do's and don't's of blasphemy.

THE SINS OF SALMAN

By Michael Walzer

Over the years, I have imagined myself writing about all sorts of things in THE NEW REPUBLIC, but blasphemy was never among them. The crime of cursing or reviling God or denying His existence or the scriptural reports of His activities is today nothing more than a misdemeanor in those Western countries where it is still legally recognized. The blasphemer might once have had his lips slit or his tongue bored through; now he can be fined, and few judges would dare even to do that. God has to look after Himself in these latter days, and until very recently, it seemed that believers and non-believers alike were content with that arrangement. It turns out that the Ayatollah is not content, and an indeterminate number of Muslims, including Muslims in the West, are prepared to follow him in reviving the old laws, indeed the oldest laws, before lip slitting and tongue boring: "And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him" (Leviticus 24:16).

But I am not, not here at least, going to worry about this extraordinary revival of laws that I took to be long dead and unlamented. As religious laws, they are dead for most of us, including, I suspect, most of the Muslims who live among us. But the laws have a secular afterlife that requires some attention. Blasphemy was originally understood as a crime against God. In the Talmud, it is said that Jews who hear the blasphemous utterance are required to tear their clothes as a sign of mourning: they grieve, presumably, for God's pain (or for the blasphemer's life: "Curse God and die"). But today we are concerned for our pain and, sometimes, for other people's. Blasphemy has become an offense against the faithful—in much the same way as pornography is an offense against the innocent and the virtuous. Given this meaning, blasphemy is an ecumenical crime, and so it is not surprising (though, in fact, I was surprised) that Christians and Jews should join Muslims in calling Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* a blasphemous book.

In 1838 a British court declared that it was only the God of the established church who could be blasphemed in Great Britain. By the end of the century, that would be regarded as an intolerant view. Blasphemy, said a court in 1883, consists in "the intention to shock, outrage, or ridicule the believer"—apparently any Christian believer and perhaps any believer at all. When the chief rabbi of Great Britain, in 1989, says that books like Rushdie's should be banned, he is clearly not speaking on behalf of the Jewish God, who never revealed

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Himself to a prophet named Muhammad. The chief rabbi is concerned with human, not divine, sensitivity: he believes that believers should not be offended. Cardinal O'Connor in New York shares that belief. When he urges Catholics not to read *The Satanic Verses*, he is speaking for those Muslim New Yorkers whose sensitivities extend, as the cardinal's do, to the thought that someone might be reading and enjoying a novel that mocks their deepest convictions.

I am not sympathetic to the chief rabbi or the cardinal, but theirs is a view (in contrast to the Ayatollah's) with which we can engage intellectually. We especially, readers of TNR, liberals and pluralists, who are proud to live in a multireligious society, have to worry about the terms of our coexistence and mutual accommodation. It is probably not a coincidence that the earliest ecumenical account of blasphemy comes from Philo, a Jewish philosopher who lived in cosmopolitan Alexandria, where the population was roughly one-third Greek, one-third Egyptian, and one-third Jewish. The law against blasphemy, Philo wrote, prohibits the cursing or reviling of *any* nation's gods. Shouldn't we adopt a similar view for the sake of our own cosmopolitanism, adding to the list of gods, perhaps, whatever it is that takes their place in the secular mind and heart?

Consider the argument of Robert Bellah: that Americans have constructed a "civil religion" through which we affirm the values of freedom, equality, pluralism, and democracy; celebrate our history as a struggle for these values; and honor the heroes of the struggle. We are, most of us, adherents of this civil religion and participants in its rituals. What, then, would we make of a novel that describes one of our heroes—Abraham Lincoln, say—in brilliant, fantastical narrative, as a Mafia hit man and a drug dealer? What attitude should we adopt toward someone who burns the flag and calls "Amerika" a Nazi country? How should we respond to a book or an article or a speech that makes fun of the idea that black and white Americans are equals, or revives ancient slanders against the Jews, or claims that we are becoming a mongrel nation? Let's assume what I expect is true, that we would find this sort of thing offensive. These are examples of a kind of secular blasphemy, and none of them gives us any reason to rejoice in the blasphemous spectacle—not even to give (as in TNR's March 13 editorial) "two cheers for blasphemy." And if we dislike this blasphemy against our own beliefs, shouldn't we respect a similar dislike on the part of anyone else? But what follows from the fact that all of us, or some of us, are offended?

The cardinal and the chief rabbi suggest that pluralism and equality require a rhetorical non-aggression pact. No one should insult, disdain, mock, scorn, or express contempt for anyone else's person or beliefs. As in the pious adage about the dead, so now with the living, we must speak nicely about one another or say nothing at all. This is public life on tiptoe, and it is hard to imagine a free society accepting such constraints. What is commonly called "the American way" is very different: we run around, jump up and down, bump into each other, and learn to live with each other's clumsiness and noise—for the sake, I suppose, of occasional grace. "All great truths," wrote George Bernard Shaw, "begin as blasphemies." That is probably untrue; at any rate, very few blasphemies end as great truths; there is too much malice involved. But blasphemy does figure in many forms of truth-seeking: imaginative literature, religious heresy, oppositionist politics. It may not be the most handsome feature of any of these; often enough, we would prefer the fantasy or the argument without the insult. But these things are not so easily separated. Writing is not so controlled an activity; anger and malice are among its animating emotions; and external control is likely to undercut the entire enterprise. That, I take it, is the point of the First Amendment, one of our most sacred texts.

Given this secular sacredness, I find the thirst for control, the call for censorship, the hatred of free spirits, profoundly offensive. Patrick Buchanan's malicious pleasure in reporting that "if the Ayatollah has his way, the last sound the trendy leftist Salman Rushdie will hear is the swish of the scimitar" is surely blasphemous; his palpable contempt for the Bill of Rights even more so. But I won't dispatch assassins or even telephone the police. My capacity for being offended should not be the measure of Buchanan's rights. More generally, the fact that people take offense is no reason to call on the state to ensure that offense is not given, for that will only encourage people to take offense—when what they should do is to argue back or, sometimes, to mock and disdain in their turn. Offense and counteroffense don't make for the highest form of democratic discourse, but they are better than what the censor is likely to leave us with once he gets involved.

But are there no limits on democratic discourse? Shouldn't we worry about insult, contempt, vilification—for the sake of some minimal civility? Perhaps we should mark off a class of speech acts called hard-core blasphemy. Like Justice Stewart with regard to hard-core pornography, I can't provide a definition of the class, but I will know it when I see it; and I won't like it. Laws against group defamation in Britain and Canada aim to capture this idea; they express a collective dislike and provide some rough guidelines for public speech in a pluralist society. These are the only plausible contemporary versions of blasphemy laws, but they still leave me uneasy. The fact that the Canadian law was used, if only briefly, to stop the importation of Rushdie's book suggests that there is reason for uneasiness. The passages in *The Satanic Verses* about Islam represent the softest kind of blasphemy ("irreverence," said TNR's reviewer) strenuously enlisted in the cause of art. Any law that reaches to them reaches too far. Maybe a series of court cases would draw the right lines, exempting *The Satanic Verses*—as *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was exempted from the pornography laws—while still banning what the Ku Klux Klan says about blacks, or Nazis about Jews, or even some "trendy leftists" about Muslims. Maybe.

Freedom is probably a better bet. But that is not to say that we should celebrate blasphemy any more than we should celebrate pornography. Writers write all sorts of things, and it is not necessary, in order to defend the act of writing, that we defend whatever gets written. To

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make a negative judgment is not to call in the state—not the sword, not the scimitar—but only the unarmed forces of opinion and culture. Great blasphemies, the kind whose courage we might admire, depend on great orthodoxies; that is why Rushdie's novel, despite its overgrown lushness, has some real power. Our own orthodoxies, even the tenets of our civil religion, are so precariously held, skepticism is so much a part of them, that they can hardly support blasphemous denials. Western blasphemers these days are mostly small-minded and nasty. The writers whom we ought to admire are very different: they seize upon one of those values that sit so lightly on our shoulders and show us what it might mean if taken seriously.

The many cases against a Palestinian state.

STATE OF CONFUSION

By Steven L. Spiegel

In the mid-1970s we heard much about the human rights violations of the Shah. America and Iran, it was said, would be well rid of him. As the Iranian protest movement grew, many American observers came to believe that our interests and values would be best served by a nationalist, neutralist government in Tehran. Of course, taking this scenario seriously required us to believe that the Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader in exile of this Persian *intifada*, was a well-meaning and ultimately harmless man. So we did: he might emerge as a figurehead, we said, but he would not rule. Perhaps he would retreat to study theology at Qum. And even if he retained political influence, he would not impose his fundamentalism on the government. The Ayatollah was a "saint," according to our U.N. ambassador, and anyway, Iran was too modern to become an Islamic state. The Shah's collapse was greeted with a combination of relief and heady expectation.

Today we see Israeli soldiers shooting at Palestinian children in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and we are understandably troubled by the image. Many in the West are convinced that sweeping changes are necessary in the Holy Land, just as they were said to be in Iran a decade ago. Indeed, there is now a cottage industry devoted to the proposition that PLO-Israeli dialogue leading to a Palestinian state will rid us of our Mideast dilemmas once and for all. There is even the Palestinian equivalent of the Ayatollah: Yasir Arafat, whose character is being willfully distorted in order that we may believe in his good intentions.

Before the optimism grows any further, a cold look at the likely implications of a sovereign Palestinian state is in order. Although the idea of a new political arrangement that would end the trouble once and for all is seductive, the stakes are too high for decisions to be made on the basis of faith and hope. And close analysis suggests that a new Palestinian state could well become, in broad terms, a replay of the new Iranian state: a victim of continued domestic turmoil and a source of new international turbulence; a solution that brings short-term relief for Western guilt, but only at great long-term cost.

To begin with, there are the many old, familiar arguments against a Palestinian state, which are no less valid for being old and familiar. After the creation of such a state, two sovereign peoples whose histories show almost unrelenting mutual antagonism would be locked together in a tiny territory the size of New Jersey. A terrorist incident, a volatile speech by one leader or another, or the machinations of an outside power could result at any time in war. Of course, in its first few years the Palestinian state would be demilitarized and patrolled by some kind of international force, but a few years is not a long time.

It is far from clear that a Palestinian state would be economically viable. In the tiny Gaza Strip there are about 600,000 Arabs living under ghastly conditions. In the West Bank, there are more than 900,000 Arabs. And the numbers are increasing. In these two areas, over 400,000 live in refugee camps, and they would undoubtedly expect to be resettled if a Palestinian government were established. Without considerable aid from the Japanese, Americans, Europeans, and other Arabs, the Palestinian state would be a hotbed of unemployment, poverty, and frustration. Matters would be even worse if Palestinians were not allowed to work in Israel; yet if they were, the possibility of terrorism would be that much larger. And what of all the Palestinians—twice as many as in the occupied territories—who now reside in surrounding Arab countries or elsewhere around the world? Many of them are from within the frontiers of pre-1967 Israel (Haifa, Jaffa, Lod, Safad, etc.), and neither Israel nor Palestine would be equipped to take them in. If a Palestinian state did try to accommodate them, the result would be havoc. If it didn't, they would

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suddenly be its enemies. Certainly this Palestinian mini-state would not sate their grievance. It might even intensify it.

Most advocates of a Palestinian state seem to envision a Palestinian Israel or perhaps an Egypt or a Jordan—in other words, a state that is either democratic or moderately authoritarian, and is in either event at least minimally stable. But is a democracy really plausible? As of now, there is no such thing as an Arab democracy. Could a mildly authoritarian regime prove stable? Probably not. Even a well-intentioned Palestinian leadership would confront citizens of wildly varying interests, ideologies, and backgrounds—a bewildering mélange of nationalists, traditionalists, fundamentalists, irredentists, and radicals. It would be a gargantuan task to mold these factions into a viable polity without civil strife and even civil war. The need to control internal tensions would probably require military force, which is likely to be limited in any settlement acceptable to Israel. In the end, there would be no way for Israel to be confident that an assassination, a coup, or even a more peaceful change wouldn't produce a radical or fundamentalist regime.

Remember, the Middle East is not a nice place. Has anyone been in Beirut lately? Do we forget the carnage of the Iran-Iraq war so quickly? It is ironic indeed that a Palestinian state of potentially fundamentalist character is gaining in popularity at the very moment when the world is awash in headlines about Khomeini's death sentence against Salman Rushdie. Westerners are finally coming to realize that Western rules of law, order, and equity often do not apply in the Middle East. Yet they continue to expect Israel to welcome an unpredictable Palestinian state on its frontier.

In some respects it is not surprising that the idea of a Palestinian state has gained currency. As a recently published report from the Jaffee Center of Tel Aviv University makes clear, all other currently discussed Israeli options have serious deficiencies: the status quo, with the *intifada* and the demographic time bomb; annexation and mass transfers, which would alienate the rest of the world, including the United States, and divide Israel; Palestinian autonomy, which the Palestinians will not accept without guarantees of eventual statehood; a deal with King Hussein, which, for the moment at least, does not seem feasible; a unilateral withdrawal from the occupied territories, the consequences of which are entirely unpredictable.

It's no wonder, then, that everyone is eager to see a new moderation in Arafat and his entourage. But the defenders of Arafat have no idea what he will do if he comes to rule a Palestinian state. They are heartened by his talk of a two-state solution, and they want to believe he has really forsaken the goal of destroying Israel. But the record is not encouraging. Here is a leader with a long history of cowardice and deceit. He has alternately been aligned with Syria, Iraq, the Ayatollah, Qaddafi, Jordan, and Egypt, in a revolving door of intrigue and mutual duplicity. Until 1988 Arafat had always genuflected to the radical wing of the PLO. Since the *intifada*, he has moved toward compromise but only under the kind of duress that will not be permanent; he has renounced terrorism, but when terrorism occurs he claims he does not control the particular PLO faction responsible. He may be right, and if so that is just another shadow over the whole Palestinian enterprise.

It has become fashionable to describe the Arab-Israeli conflict as a dispute that has returned to its roots: the Arab and Jewish communities of the former British mandate of Palestine. But this wrongly suggests a comfortable insulation from the rest of the Middle East. As the Arab states interfered many times before in Palestine, they can do so again. So any solution must take into account the relationship of the Palestinians to their neighbors. If Syria attacks Israel, for example, what does a Palestinian state do? If there is Palestinian unrest in either Jordan or Israel, does a Palestinian state ignore it? As the Israelis often point out, even if a Palestinian state were demilitarized, a lightning attack against Israel could be launched by Jordan with Palestinian consent. Alternatively, Palestine could be the base from which terrorists either conducted raids or lobbed rockets into Jerusalem or Tel Aviv. A Palestinian leadership might be unable or unwilling to control this activity; in fact, such activity is likely to please at least some of this leadership, which even under the best of circumstances won't behave like a single rational actor.

These scenarios are not new, of course. But the problem goes much deeper than they suggest. In myriad ways, a Palestinian state would complicate geopolitics throughout the Middle East and, indeed, on the larger international stage, substantially increasing the range of combustive possibilities. That is why the technical solutions to Israeli security concerns—an international peacekeeping force, etc.—are not adequate. The political genie unleashed by a new Palestine is the real problem to be addressed.

Fundamentally, the question is the international constellation into which a Palestinian state would fit. First, what would its relations be with the great powers, especially the United States and the U.S.S.R.? Second, what of its relations with the other Arab countries and Iran? Would it be closer to radical countries such as Libya, Iraq, Syria, and Iran, or to conservative states such as Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Egypt? Finally, what would its relations be to its two critical neighbors, Israel and Jordan? And would the answers to these questions, once they materialized, remain stable? Who could prevent a Palestinian leader from switching allies as Arab nations often have in recent years? Remember, in the 1960s Libya was a conservative monarchy and Egypt a radical client of the U.S.S.R.

As the new Palestinian state emerged in the region, it would assume a role in what the late Malcolm Kerr called "the Arab cold war." If its role were passive, and it focused on the Herculean task of constructing a new polity, it would invite pressures from outside states. Defenders of the "true Palestinian faith" like a Qaddafi or an Assad or a Khomeini would not forgive the settlement with Israel. They would argue that the Jewish interloper must be destroyed. Inevitably there would be resonances in the new Palestine (and beyond). Today, as Palestinian mobs demonstrate in the territories and

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in Jerusalem, they not only shout, "Allah is great." They add, "Death to the Jews." If the Palestinian leadership refused to participate in this holy war, which might be only a war of attrition, such states would seek to destabilize the regime. They might well succeed.

The leadership of the Palestinian state—presumably the Fatah wing of the PLO—would be sensitive to these perils and the consequent need to be active in the region. The Palestinian leadership would no longer need its Arab brethren to attain a state, but it would need them for protection from whichever Arabs opposed the regime in power. After all, Arafat's wing of the PLO was unable to maintain its alliance with all Arab states when Arafat represented the most unifying theme in Arab politics—the idea of a Palestinian state. He certainly would be unable to retain consensual support once he actually ruled as a sovereign (especially since for many Arab regimes, the public advocacy of such a state has been more than matched by a secret fear of its emergence). Assad, for example, could not condone a Palestinian state that contradicts his own view of Syria's destiny. He has not yet been heard from on the idea that evokes so much exuberance from others. And there is no reason to think that he'd be bought off by the restoration of the Golan Heights to his control. There is also no reason for the Israelis to contemplate such a restoration: there isn't even the problem of a restive local population, which makes Palestinianism so salient.

Once the Palestinian state was engaged in the intrigues of intra-Arab politics, its choice of allies would depend partly on domestic politics and rivalries within the regime. If the Palestinians moved in a radical nationalist direction, opportunities for coalitions with states as varied as Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Iran would emerge. As we have seen over the last decade, these countries are often hostile to each other and often at war. Engagement with them could focus Palestine on foreign adventures—efforts to thwart regimes in Damascus or Baghdad, or to establish a client regime in Lebanon; attempts to use the "overseas Palestinians" to overthrow the Saudis; efforts to promote Islamic fundamentalism or to sponsor terrorist campaigns in Europe. Radical nationalists have proved repeatedly that they have a rich ingenuity when it comes to fomenting trouble. Some of these projects might have the effect of directing the Palestinians' mischief away from Israel. But does anyone doubt that in an atmosphere of radical anti-Westernism, Israeli security and American interests would suffer?

Critics will claim that the Palestinians are too educated and advanced to engage in such foolishness. We should recall similar arguments about the Iranians. But let us cede the point that a Palestinian state is more likely to align with more moderate regimes, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, or Jordan. Even this arrangement could dangerously strain relations with Israel. In the Middle East, conservative regimes are ever fearful of radicals and fundamentalists, and commensurately reluctant to do business with Israel. Even the most courageous and powerful government of all the Arab regimes—the Egyptian, which actually made peace with Israel—has been terrified of the "Arab consensus" since the death of Sadat. The cold peace between Israel and Egypt is exactly ten years, and both countries deserve credit for its maintenance. But the gradually deteriorating quality of the relationship is hardly cause for optimism. And remember: unlike Egypt, the new state of Palestine would have the fundamental problem of a dissatisfied diaspora constituency spread across the Arab world, with significant numbers residing in extremist countries.

So if the Palestinian regime were to pursue a conservative policy, most likely the Israelis would be reduced to delicate isolation, waiting to see if it could withstand the angry tide of regional Arab politics. After 50-odd years of Jewish statehood, Israel would still be a pariah, vilified by part of the Middle East and kept at arm's length by the rest. This would be an even more precarious existence than Israel endured in the 1960s, when the West Bank was controlled by a Jordanian regime that was solidly in control of its power base.

And this is actually a relatively sunny scenario; a Palestinian state nominally aligned with the conservative Arab states might well pursue an actively hostile foreign policy. A relatively responsible regime could soon conclude that unless it adopted a dynamic approach it would fall prey to its adversaries. It might foment terrorism against Israel and attempt to dilute the peace agreement. It might move against Jordan and/or Lebanon, attempting by subversion to emerge with a sympathetic or subservient regime in these countries. Such a Palestinian thrust toward *lebensraum*, motivated also by the desire to integrate the surrounding Palestinian diaspora into the new society, would pose an immediate concern to any Israeli government, and tensions would heighten. There is also the likely risk that a semi-independent Palestinian entity in confederation with Jordan—which has a Palestinian majority—could nurse ambitions of taking over the entire kingdom.

In theory, of course, there could emerge a Palestinian state that would espouse a doctrine of partnership with Israel. Cooperation between the two former adversaries, as well as the Palestinians' sponsorship of close Israeli relations with other Arab countries, might create an environment conducive to peace. Indeed, perhaps a grand alliance among the two and Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia would develop. But if this is what Arafat has in mind, it is a well-kept secret. Nothing in his record or background suggests he would be prepared to challenge his Arab and Palestinian enemies by entering into an alignment with Israel (if it were willing) that would invariably leave him the junior partner. And even if he did, no one could rely on his maintaining power, or even staying alive. After all, this has been tried before by Arabs: King Abdullah, Anwar Sadat, Bashir Gemayel—all of whom died at the hands of assassins. Arafat knows firsthand how far death squads can reach, and of the power of the nationalist, radical, and fundamentalist forces that would be aligned against him.

Alluding to the vivid dangers that Israel now confronts in the frenzy for a Palestinian state seems churlish and ungenerous. The apprehensive are seen as the world's biggest party poopers. This is particularly the case when their anxiety is compared with the beguiling optimism of Palestinian spokesmen and their surrogates. But a relentless skepticism is in order; it is the

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utopians who should be under suspicion. Whenever someone imagines a new Marshall Plan as a deus ex machina for the region or conjures up the Benelux countries as a model for Middle East regional cooperation, that someone is blowing smoke in your eyes. He is trying to evade the concrete and intrinsic impediments to peace by mustering a fantasy.

Is the seemingly inexorable movement toward a Palestinian state truly inexorable? No. The *intifada*, literally the "dusting off," may threaten Israel's economy, its social and political unity, and its moral standing, but it does not threaten its survival. (Of course, the uprising is also a low-cost operation for the Palestinians, particularly when measured against the norms of how insurgencies are dealt with in the Arab world.) And certainly, the United States is not as pressured as the advocates of a Palestinian state suggest. What, after all, are the real American interests in Nablus and Ramallah? Moreover, Soviet foreign policy is in transformation. Improved relations with the United States are a major priority, and Moscow's dialogue with Israel has advanced much further than Washington's with the PLO. As the Arab states have done for decades, the Russians may well find themselves swearing eternal fidelity to the Palestinians while compromising that fidelity as soon as convenience dictates. Just ask Syrian president Assad about the Kremlin's capacity to redefine past commitments.

All of this puts Washington in a peculiarly favorable position to make the Soviets our partners in the search for durable peace. As for Israel's course of action: its security could never be significantly enhanced without bilateral discussions with at least several key Arab states. The question is what to do if Israel is offered a series of such discussions that entails discussions with Arafat. The Israeli government would then have to decide whether it could more effectively expose the weakness of a Palestinian state through this option or through continued isolation.

No matter what course is taken, we must recognize that we will not reach the end for many years, and perhaps decades. Reaching a point where Arafat's PLO is even indirectly involved in some kind of Palestinian self-rule will require a virtual revolution, and moving beyond that point will be even harder. Whether the eventual result is confederation with Jordan or Israel or an independent state, it will require a gradual process in which perceptions slowly change and building blocks are arduously moved into place. Those who believe in the instantaneous satisfaction of a TV extravaganza are destined for disappointment. Those who are patient enough to live with uncertainty for many years may be rewarded. Engineering a livable future in Palestine is a delicate, painstaking operation. For now, the Israelis are doomed to live dangerously.

Racism 101 at Harvard.

WHITE LIKE ME

By Robert R. Detlefsen

"Professors should have less freedom of expression than writers and artists, because professors are supposed to be creating a better community."

"When delivering a lecture, one should be careful not to introduce any sort of thing that might hurt a group."

"Throwing tampons at the male, sexist dogs of Dartmouth was educational."

"These places might be the slickest form of genocide going."

Talk such as this is a sure sign that one is on the campus of a great university. Recently at Harvard I was part of an audience treated to these and other truisms. The occasion was a week-long program of panels and "workshops" collectively titled "AWARE"—an acronym standing for "Actively Working Against Racism and Ethnocentrism."

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AWARE week was the brainchild of Dean Hilda Hernandez-Gravelle of Harvard's Office of Race Relations and Minority Affairs. (Dean Hernandez-Gravelle made a splash last fall by calling for a ban on '50s nostalgia parties because racism was rampant in America during that decade.) According to the "Workshop Evaluation Forms" that were distributed to the audience after each event, the goals of AWARE week were: "a) to address people's denial about racism; b) to engage people in trying to understand racism and to take responsibility to change it through action; c) to give people some new perspectives, ideals, and tools to use."

The week's events opened on Tuesday with an exercise in collective guilt. As keynote speaker, Professor John Dovidio, a research psychologist from Colgate University, delivered a speech titled "Racism Among the Well-Intentioned." That includes about everyone; according to Dovidio, 85 percent of white Americans harbor some form of subtle racism, while 15 percent

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are overt racists. He devoted most of his speech to reciting the results of clinical research that purports to show how even the most compassionate among us harbor "racist attitudes": we prefer the company of other white people, we are more likely to make positive assumptions about members of "our" group, etc. He even led the audience through a word-association exercise to show how racial bias is culturally ingrained:

DOVIDIO: What do you think of when I say the word "black"?

AUDIENCE: Black magic! Witches! Devil's food cake!

DOVIDIO: And when I say "white"?

AUDIENCE: Snow White! Angel food cake!

Get the picture?

Dovidio was especially instructive when he spoke of his own culturally ingrained bias. He described an incident in which he was trying to locate a library book. Finally he narrowed his search to two specific aisles—the book was definitely in one of them. After some further searching he realized that he had been concentrating, for no immediately discernable reason, on just one of the two aisles. Why was he avoiding the other aisle? Then it dawned on him. At the end of the aisle in which he had concentrated his search was a white person seated at a study carrel; at the end of the other aisle—the one he had been subconsciously avoiding—was a black person seated at a study carrel.

There are surely few places in America that are more secular and cosmopolitan than Harvard, and yet I was struck by how closely the atmosphere surrounding Dovidio's keynote address had resembled a religious revival meeting. Instead of the doctrine of Original Sin and the resultant inherent sinfulness of man—even the most pious of men—we had the clinically proven fact of pandemic racism, manifest even among the well-intentioned. Instead of a feverish evangelical preacher who mesmerizes audiences with lurid tales of his own moral transgressions, we had a professor of psychology who delivered his own stunning mea culpa. And like a religious congregation, Dovidio's flock consisted entirely of the already converted; when told of their manifest racism, they nodded in agreement. During the question period that followed the speech, no one rose to challenge his contention that we are all guilty of racism.

On Thursday a panel titled "Institutional Racism: What Price Are You Paying?" afforded an opportunity to learn about the practical consequences of racism at Harvard. One panelist, Wayne Dudley, a history professor at Fitchburg State College, saw institutional racism in the hiring and promotion of college faculty. In one specific case that he described, a black female Ph.D. was hired as an assistant professor. As a junior faculty member who was the only black in her department, she worked tirelessly to increase minority student enrollments, yet she was denied tenure because she had not published sufficiently in the scholarly journals. I waited for the smoking gun that would point to racism in this story, but instead Dudley proceeded to "Case No. 2."

That evening a film titled "Racism 101" was shown in one of the large lecture halls on campus. According to the AWARE calendar, the film would be followed by a discussion led by Gregory Ricks, identified as "Senior Fellow at the Campus Opportunity Outreach League." "Racism 101" is a documentary originally broadcast as part of the "Frontline" series on public television. It provides a fairly evenhanded examination of racial conflict at the University of Michigan, the University of Massachusetts—Amherst, and Dartmouth College. But the film was just a mundane prelude to the evening's main production, whose star was the irrepressible Ricks.

We had just seen him, larger than life, on the big screen; he had been a dean at Dartmouth during the contretemps there. As soon as the film ended, he moved to the front of the auditorium and modestly introduced himself to the racially mixed audience. "I'm not an expert, and I'm not a martyr—I'm just a brother like you, just struggling and trying to make it." Ricks didn't want to discuss the film. He had something else on his mind, and he delivered it in the form of a rhetorical question: "Are these schools [Harvard, Dartmouth, and other elite colleges] genocidal in nature?"—genocidal, that is, with respect to "blacks, feminists, and others trying to change the status quo?" He answered by telling of a black student whom he had counseled at Dartmouth. The student asked him if Dartmouth "had an agenda to take away his confidence." In high school, the student explained, he had had "visions of kicking the world's ass," but now, thanks to Dartmouth, he wasn't sure if he was up to it. Ricks, of course, confidently assured the student that Dartmouth had indeed conspired against him: "They have brought you in, turned you around, and fucked up your mind." The implication was that genocide of this sort was also being waged against the black students of Harvard. So much for an Ivy League education.

Ricks was warmed up now, and he concluded his remarks with a furious barrage of exhortations and admonitions: "Don't tolerate racist jokes!" "Don't tolerate any racist, sexist, homophobic discussions at the dining table, or anywhere else!" "Don't sleep with racist, sexist dogs just because they're cute!" "Throwing tampons at the male, sexist dogs of Dartmouth was educational!" "Create an environment that will force these institutions to do what is just; why do we have to have a fact-finding commission before we respond to student demands?" When he had finished, a young white woman in the audience said she had experienced "minority ethnocentrism"—in her dormitory, in the dining hall, in the classroom. "They don't want to know anything about me," she said. "How do you know?" Ricks shot back. The young woman sheepishly admitted that she may have overgeneralized. It was the only time all week that I heard an allegation of racial insensitivity challenged by an AWARE participant.

Friday's single event was a faculty panel convened to discuss "Racial Awareness, Sensitivities, and Academic Freedom." The issue the panelists would address—whether there are circumstances under which the demand for racial sensitivity in the academy compromises academic freedom—was a subject fit for more than abstract speculation at Harvard. Last year, in an incident that received wide publicity, three black undergraduates

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formally charged two eminent Harvard history professors with displaying racial insensitivity while teaching a course on "The Peopling of America"—citing, for example, their use of the term "American Indian" instead of "Native American."

It was against this backdrop that the panel of five distinguished Harvard professors—including three holders of endowed chairs—took up the matter of racial sensitivity and academic freedom. Professor of Science William Bossert was no stranger to racism, he told the audience. He had grown up in the Jim Crow South, and he knew it when he saw it; the racism that he had observed as a white Southerner had made a profound and lasting impression upon him. Professors, he declared, should "edit" potentially offensive material from their lectures unless it is undeniably relevant and necessary to the subject being taught. Karel Liem, a professor of ichthyology, was far less equivocal: in large lecture situations, he asserted, one should never "introduce any sort of thing that might hurt a group." "Modulating" was the name Liem gave to this practice of self-censorship. "The pain that racial insensitivity can create is more important than a professor's academic freedom," he declared. Two other panelists voiced their agreement. Barbara Johnson, a comparative literature professor, chimed in with her opinion that professors should have less freedom of expression than writers and artists, because professors are supposed to be creating a better community.

At this point the lone dissenting panelist was heard. Taking the position that professors should not shrink from the pursuit of truth for any reason—a position that hardly anyone within the academy would have questioned 20 years ago—Harvey Mansfield, a professor of government, rattled the audience by speaking not only in defense of free speech but in opposition to the very purpose of AWARE week. The kind of sensitivity that the AWARE organizers sought to instill in people would have the perverse effect of closing them off from ideas and experiences that might broaden their horizons and disabuse them of their prejudices, he said. In other words, hypersensitivity can promote parochialism and intolerance. Moreover, in addition to these "general disadvantages for learning," AWARE-style sensitivity also had "specific disadvantages for blacks." As an example, Mansfield cited the reception that greeted the Moynihan Report on the causes of poverty among blacks in the 1960s. Many black leaders were offended by the report's focus on the dissolution of the black family as a principal cause of poverty, and they reacted by vilifying Daniel Moynihan, the messenger who had brought the bad news. Today few doubt the validity of the Moynihan Report, yet in the 20 years since its release the destructive trends it described have only accelerated—in part, perhaps, because of the intransigence of those whose prejudices kept them from accepting a painful reality.

Nor was this all. The Moynihan phenomenon, Mansfield continued, was repeated a year ago right here at Harvard, as "black students wrongly accused two history professors of racial insensitivity. The charges were made irresponsibly, reported irresponsibly, and dealt with inadequately." Finally, Mansfield observed, AWARE-style sensitivity makes it difficult for blacks to make friends with whites, and vice versa. A sensitivity that takes the form of a never-ending harangue is hardly conducive to harmonious relations: "Charges of racism pull us apart." "The burden of my remarks," Mansfield concluded, "has been that people need to relax a little about racial insensitivity.... We should all tell a few more jokes." This was almost too much for the AWAREists to bear; Johnson, who was seated next to Mansfield on the panel, had by now lowered her head and buried her face in her hands. One of the black students who had brought the charges of insensitivity against the two history professors rose to denounce Mansfield. Mansfield wasn't qualified to speak in defense of the accused professors, she declared, because as "a white male over 40" he was incapable of judging the merits of a charge of racial insensitivity. This drew a big ovation.

After the discussion had concluded and the panelists had left the stage, a few knots of students remained in the auditorium, talking among themselves. As I came close to one group, I realized the students were talking about Mansfield. "What an asshole," said one woman. Her companions nodded. I asked her if she thought it had been a mistake to invite someone like Mansfield to be on an AWARE-week panel. "Not at all," she said brightly. "There are lots of professors here who feel the way he does. That's what we have to struggle against."

Saturday was the final day of AWARE week. Fred Jewett, dean of Harvard College, launched the day's festivities with a rhapsodic speech in which he praised the goals of AWARE week and challenged the audience to keep its spirit alive throughout the rest of the year. Many of the people who had served on earlier panels were back for one last fling. Among the speakers whom I listened to that day, one in particular stood out. He was Lawrence Watson, identified in the AWARE week calendar as "Assistant Dean for Academic Administration at the Graduate School of Design and the Co-Chairman of the Association of Black Faculty and Administrators." Watson was the moderator of a panel on "Classroom Sensitivity: The Experience of Teaching and Learning," and after reading a lengthy list of specific elements of "white privilege"—a litany that included, inter alia, white people's unique ability to purchase band-aids that match their skin tone—he offered the following assurance to minority students: "When you experience racial insensitivity in the classroom, whatever way you choose to deal with it is valid, provided you are willing to accept the consequences." And later, in the same vein: "Overreacting and being paranoid is the only way we can deal with this system.... Never think that you imagined it [racial insensitivity], because chances are that you didn't."

This is remarkable counsel for a responsible adult to give to impressionable youths in such a highly charged context. And it is almost unbelievable in its lack of empathy—"sensitivity," you might say—for innocent persons who are certain to be the targets of censorship and character assassination at the hands of a zealous squadron of self-styled thought police.

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What will be the legacy of AWARE week? If I were a Harvard professor—particularly if I taught in the humanities or the social sciences—I would start to worry. The same administration that refused to defend two of the university's most distinguished professors against an onslaught of scurrilous attacks actively supported a program whose effect, whatever its stated intent, was to encourage more such attacks.

Presumably one of the reasons that students and their parents are willing to spend $19,000 a year on Harvard is to gain access to one of the world's best collections of scholarly minds. Yet now students may not be offered all that those minds have to give, because many professors will be cowed into submission by the forces of bigotry and intolerance that have been newly empowered by the purveyors of "sensitivity." Black students at Harvard will pay an additional price. At one of the AWARE events I attended I heard a black student say that he preferred to sit at the "black table" in the dining hall because he found whites "boring." "They don't want to contend with me on anything," he said. But who can blame them? What can one expect from a group of people who have been told incessantly that they are racist, and that they must be highly circumspect in their relations with blacks lest their racism reveal itself in the form of an offensive word or two? Moreover, to the extent that the charge of "racism" is repeatedly and gratuitously tossed about as it was during AWARE week, there is a danger that the evil of genuine racism will become trivialized and hence will be ignored. •

The Global Zeitgeist Checklist: France

1. THE LAST SOCIALIST √
Financial scandals. One of Mitterrand's oldest friends is caught insider-trading on a nationalized firm's stock. Then a government-sponsored takeover of a privatized bank ends up enriching businessmen close to his party. "The sleaziest left in Europe," charges the opposition. Mitterrand's response? Attack capitalism on TV for two hours. The market is "suspect," its money "corrupting" and "promiscuous." While their economy booms, the French are confused: Who elected this socialist, anyway?

2. BAD TIMING √
Foreign policy. The government puts its decolonization of New Caledonia to a vote, but nobody comes. Mitterrand travels to Czechoslovakia, and anti-government riots break out soon after. Two days after Mitterrand's foreign minister normalizes relations with Iran's government, Salman Rushdie is sentenced to death. Nothing but foreign policy disasters since the French government was formed last summer. More embarrassing still, the world hasn't noticed.

3. STRIKEOUT √
Strikes. Hoping the Socialists would be pushovers, public employees' unions have been striking for raises since the fall. First nurses and mailmen, then train conductors, teachers, prison guards, and meteorologists. The public is fed up, but the government hangs surprisingly tough. The unions are learning that *le dialogue* means "no" in French.

4. WEIRD BEEF √
Fortress Europe. English steaks and Belgian cheeses *are* scary. But juicy American hormone-steaks? The recent European move to ban American beef had nothing to do with health concerns. But it is a sign of things to come. When protectionism officially "disappears" in 1993, look for new forms of economic nationalism disguised as health and environmental policies.

5. CELEBRATE THE REVOLUTION WITHOUT ME √
Bicentenary. Political struggles have hopelessly scrambled planning of the Bastille Day celebrations. An adman now offers an 11th-hour plan for a "multiethnic and multitribal" mega-show on the Champs Elysées. Floats from around the globe, music by Quincy Jones. With the whole world watching, it promises to make our Statue of Liberty celebrations look like an Amish wedding.

6. CAN YOU SPELL THAT? √
Orthography. What's the difference between *eut* and *eût*? The French don't remember either. Now ten distinguished linguists have joined the popular call to simplify and rationalize French spelling. They may succeed. The government wants to decrease the dropout rate, and teachers, tired of correcting homework, have told their unions to support the reform. An important *tâche* (or *tache*?).

7. OVERDUE √
Libraries. No kidding: Parisians are all excited about a new library. Not just any library, but the biggest in the world—The Really Big Library (*La Très Grande Bibliotèque*). Anything to replace today's frightening Bastilles of the mind, but why so big? And why in Paris? This will be Mitterrand's Xanadu.

8. I. M. PAID √
The Pyramid. Mitterrand's other architectural monument, the I. M. Pei glass pyramid at the Louvre, was supposed to be open for the bicentenary. Latest obstacle: it's uncleanable. Mountain climbers have been hired, and are being suspended inside and out with Windex and squeegees, trying to let some light in. No luck so far.

9. MERDE √
Pooper scoopers. Although Paris streets are spotless from constant cleaning, 20 tons of dog waste are dropped daily on sidewalks, making some impassable. Parisians refuse to pick up, so the city does it for them with vacuum-equipped motorcycles. Cost: $12 million a year. A scooper law would be political suicide, so the city is helpless. The only ray of hope is that the number of dogs is slowly declining.

MARK LILLA

Mark Lilla lives in Paris.

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Heavy Atmospheres

Thomas Mann's story "Mario and the Magician" (1929), about the tragic result of a clairvoyant's performance in an Italian seaside resort, is sometimes read as an allegory of Italy under fascism. István Szabó's new film **Hanussen** (Columbia) is about an Austrian clairvoyant whose performances in Central Europe and in Berlin coincide with the rise of Nazism and lead to a tragic end. The screenplay by Szabó and Peter Dobai is derived from facts about an actual Hanussen, and I don't know that either of these authors ever read the Mann story. If they haven't, the reminders of Mann in the film are all the more provocative, since on their own the filmmakers saw a connection between a thaumaturge and a quasi-sacral politics.

Szabó considers *Hanussen*, which is the protagonist's name, the last part of a trilogy. Film trilogies are often ex post facto affairs—the director decides later that that's what he was making—but certainly the first two films are also steeped in 20th-century politics and war. *Mephisto* (again based on fact) dealt with a German actor who was co-opted by the Nazis; *Colonel Redl* (*again* based on fact) dealt with the treachery and homosexuality of an Austrian officer in the 1914 era. *Hanussen* has negative and positive resemblances to the previous two. Like them, it's more portentous than resolved. But like them, it's rich in detail and atmospherics that are more rewarding than its story.

Further links: *Hanussen* has the same cinematographer as the other two, Lajos Koltai, and the same leading actor, Klaus Maria Brandauer. Koltai's work is almost an analogue of the whole film, more lush than clarifying. Brandauer, however, gives his best performance in the "trilogy," more acutely inflected, more reticently strong, less frantic for effects. By the film's end he has drawn a man cunning yet unsure, vain of his occult power yet somewhat frightened, struggling yet resigned to his fate.

That resignation connects to Szabó's strength. Hanussen seems almost to accept his fate because he is a Central European, as if the people of his country, Austria, and of *Mitteleuropa* generally, are the pawns of harsh political powers. (Two of the lesser power figures in the film are based on historical personages, Leni Riefenstahl and Walter Rathenau, the German minister of foreign affairs who was murdered by anti-Semite nationalists in 1922.) Szabó understands these Central Europeans and creates their world vividly: hotel lobbies, restaurants, cafés, Biedermeier apartments, clothes, of course—and faces. What a gallery of faces. Most of them are Hungarian actors—Erland Josephson, Swedish, is an exception—and all of them are presumably dubbed in the German of the sound track. Those faces are the film's real locus.

Hanussen begins in a battle of World War I, as some Austrian troops murmur the Lord's Prayer just before an attack. (The film's low point comes soon after: a banal shot of a crucified Jesus in a church amid the carnage.) A traumatized soldier named Schneider (Brandauer) comes under the care of a Jewish psychiatrist (Josephson); discovers his visionary powers; becomes, after the war, a professional with the name Hanussen; and tours. As the 1930s begin, he finds himself in the uncomfortable position of predicting Hitler's success, which leads to discomforts and dangers.

Hanussen has no specific plot parallels with Mann's great story; the relation is thematic—the linkage of performance to power and the operation of hypnosis in the political sphere. Though those themes are not completely realized, they resonate.

We're back in the SoHo art world again. (We were there a few weeks ago with the Scorsese-Price segment of *New York Stories*.) **Slaves of New York** (Tri-Star) was adapted by Tama Janowitz from her book of that title—a collection of stories that are like raids on a village. It makes us think of a sly, quick creature that waits its moment, darts out, grabs its prey, and scurries back to its lair.

With Janowitz, that prey is some perception of place, of traffic in that place,

FILMS WORTH SEEING

High Hopes. *A dropout London couple, in their 30s, skewer Thatcher's Britain in free-form, sometimes overdone, but humane and witty style. (Reviewed 3/13/89)* **Lawrence of Arabia**. *Time—and the restoration of the lost bits—have transformed it from intelligent, gorgeous spectacle to a near-masterpiece. Hurrah, 25 years later, for everyone concerned. (2/20/89)* **New York Stories**. *Three separate tales of Manhattan. Martin Scorsese's supercharged imbroglio in the SoHo art world is best; Woody Allen's Jewish-mother joke is a touch long but wry; Francis Coppola's account of a rich child in a luxe hotel is a bomb. (3/27/89)* **Under the Sun of Satan**. *Maurice Pialat's rendering of a Bernanos novel is worth comparison with Robert Bresson's films from Bernanos. Praise enough. (4/3/89)* **—SK**

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of diction and vogue rather than character. Her pieces are more like sharp-eyed fragments of social history than finished stories. From those pieces she chose elements to weave into a film narrative. She kept most of the original ambience, including the fact that, despite the constant chatter about cohabitations and couplings, her writing is quite unerotic. And she has promoted one of her characters, a young hat designer named Eleanor, to the place of protagonist.

As protagonist, Eleanor fails. As tent pole for a circus tent full of odd figures, she is a bit more successful—which is to say that the other people of the picture en bloc are more interesting than she is. The film's limpness is due in large degree to the screenplay: it wants to be conventionally shaped, which the stories are not. If Janowitz had concentrated her screenplay on exploring lives as her stories do, as Mike Leigh did in his film *High Hopes*, the texture might have been more rewarding.

But the film would still have needed a different cast and a different director. The role of Eleanor, which is supposed to fix us on her life and loves and career and is also meant to be a kind of tour guide, is played by Bernadette Peters, whose charms and comic winsomeness escape me on stage and screen. She always gives me the feeling that I'm not a member of a coterie that adores her and for whom she is performing. Partly because of Peters's inability to make us care about her world, almost all the people she knows blur together.

Even this blurriness might have been done for some purpose, as a comment on this society, but there's no clue that the director, James Ivory, had any such intent. He wants only to capture the environment head-on and seems unaware that scenes are amorphous, pace is generally torpid, and performances, insofar as the word can be used, are Silly-Putty. Ivory's idea of keeping his cinema style hip, in key with his subject, is to throw in a split screen from time to time, but since the relevance of the split to what's going on is never apparent, the device is like a spray-can graffito on a Model A Ford.

The music track is pretty much predictable, with one anomaly, a snatch of an aria from an opera by that cut-rate Richard Strauss, Erich Korngold. Why it suddenly pops up is never explained, least of all by Eleanor's character.

The film's one amusement is its costumes. They are by Carol Ramsey, and—along with Stephen Sprouse's clothes for a fashion-show sequence—they are droll exaggerations of the uniforms that these people wear as members of a non-uniform army. •

Abdullah's lessons for the Middle East.

The King of Realism

BY FOUAD AJAMI

Shortly before he walked away from his Palestinian assignment and relinquished his claim to the West Bank last July, King Hussein of Jordan spoke of the dead. The young among the Palestinians, he said, should refrain from passing "unjust judgment on both our fathers and grandfathers and theirs." Hussein was speaking of his own grandfather. The memory of King Abdullah will not go away; it haunts the Hashemites and the Palestinians.

Abdullah was struck down by a Palestinian assassin in 1951. Politically conscious Arabs had an easy time, for a while, with the legacy of the murdered monarch. He had committed "treason," dealt with the Jews, been a stooge of the British, compromised Arab rights in Palestine, and paid for it. He was a relic of the imperial age at a time when Arabs were sure that a new world, a more independent one, beckoned. A year after Abdullah's murder, Gamal Abdel Nasser, a good 30 years younger than Abdullah, seized power in Egypt. Immediately an entirely different politics came to the Arab world. It was an age of revolutionary heroes and frenzied masses; and Abdullah was no hero.

Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, The Zionist Movement and the Partition of Palestine
by Avi Shlaim
(Columbia University Press, 676 pp., $40)

King Abdullah, Britain and the Making of Jordan
by Mary C. Wilson
(Cambridge University Press, 282 pp., $42.50)

Then calamities visited the Arabs. The parts of Palestine that Abdullah's bedouin forces held for the Arabs in the 1948 war were lost to Israel in the Six-Day War. The age of passionate nationalism issued in ruin, in sterile tyrannies. Abdullah may have been an old-fashioned patriarch, but at least he had no blood on his hands. The "national security" states that overthrew Abdullah's kind in Syria, Iraq, and Egypt, by contrast, went on to commit atrocities beyond Abdullah's imagination. It was only a matter of time before the ghost of Abdullah returned to mock the officers and the gunmen and the pamphleteers who had belittled him.

Nasser's successor Sadat traveled to Jerusalem, said that he was willing to let bygones be bygones, that he knew that Israel was there to stay. Abdullah had been there early. He had grasped that the Jewish claim in Palestine could not be denied. He may not have fully understood the depth and the tenacity of the Zionist movement, but he knew a going enterprise when he saw one. He had accepted the partition of Palestine between Arab and Jew as early as 1937. "The Pillars of Zionism," he observed on one occasion, "are three: The Balfour Declaration, the European nations which have decided to expel the Jews from their territories and direct them to Palestine, and those partisans of the Arabs who accept no solutions but are content with weeping and wailing."

The old-fashioned ruler had read the politics and the situation of the Jews in Palestine, and the politics of his Arab kinsmen, with remarkable clarity. And he was "indiscreet" enough to say some painful things about the matter of Palestine. "Palestine is still at the mercy of its own feuds," he wrote in 1945:

> The Arabs are in retreat while the Jews continue to add to their land acquisitions. On a journey there I was surprised to see the settlements of the Jews. . . . The entire coast from Haifa to Jaffa is now theirs. They have built up the wilderness, revived its dead, turned it into a Garden of Eden, pushed the Arabs to the barren mountains. Meanwhile Palestinian affairs are still in the hands of those who ruined the welfare of the country.

Nearly four decades after Abdullah's murder, the Arab world has come full circle, has come around to his style of statecraft. Even "revolutionaries" now speak the language of partition and compromise. It is no wonder that King Hus-

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sein, Abdullah's grandson and political heir, would have the self-confidence to remind other Arabs, in the summer of 1988, at a summit in Algiers, of the legacy of his grandfather:

> How many in the young generation of Palestinians or Arabs realize that the Jordanian Arab Legion managed to rescue the greater portion of what remained of Palestine including Arab Jerusalem in the 1948 war?

"Mr. Bevin's Little King," Abdullah was called, after British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin; and that, too, Arab history has corrected, or placed in proper perspective. After all the sound and all the fury of Nasserism, after its great revolt against the West, an American dominion prevails in Cairo today. And in what must be a supreme irony of recent Arab history, the self-styled anti-imperialists of the PLO now insist that a dialogue with America in a far away North African capital is a great victory for their people. Treason, apparently, is in the eye of the beholder. Perhaps it is that men who have seen the disintegration of their own world no longer bother to conceal their dependence on mightier powers. Banished from Beirut in 1982, the Palestinian enterprise has come to Washington. The bets of the Palestinians have been placed on the preeminent Western power, just as Abdullah had placed his own bets on the British. But do not look for an exoneration of the dead. The Palestinians and the Arabs who are retracing Abdullah's footsteps, who are attempting to get back what Abdullah had secured for the Arabs in the 1948 war, have not quite faced all their own history. To the current diplomacy these men come unrepentant. History, for them, is without irony.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Two political historians, Mary Wilson, who teaches at New York University, and Avi Shlaim, a British-Israeli scholar at Oxford, have retrieved the record of Abdullah. They are meticulous scholars who have vividly mined the archives. Their concerns are complementary. Wilson's book is a thorough biography of the Hashemite ruler, and an account of the making of the modest desert domain that Britain carved out for him east of the Jordan River in 1921. It is also a chronicle of Abdullah's relentless pursuit, over three decades, in Damascus, Iraq, the Saudi realm, and Palestine, of a political kingdom larger than his own impoverished principality. Shlaim's splendid book, magisterial and provocative, has a single focus: Abdullah's relations with the Jews across the river and with the Palestinians.

Both authors disapprove of Abdullah, but differently. Wilson writes as a foreign friend of Arab nationalism (my words, not hers), and the meandering ways of Abdullah are not to her liking. Throughout the book, there is a tone of disapproval. Abdullah leased land to the Jewish Agency; was a supplicant of Britain; a constant meddler in Arab affairs. His charm, the biographer tells us, may have worked on the British, but was never in evidence in his dealing with Arabs, to whom he was "abrasive." More fundamentally, he was a man who let down Arab nationalists in Syria, and who ceded Arab rights in Palestine in pursuit of his own ambitions.

Shlaim's criticism of Abdullah is made of different stuff. Shlaim is a young historian at odds with the dominant historiography of modern Zionism. He embraces revisionism: "Let it be stated at the outset that this is a revisionist history which differs very sharply, and on many important points, from the pro-Zionist as well as the pro-Arab histories on this subject." He did not set out to write this sort of book, he tells us; the vast documents—British, Zionist, and some Arab accounts—led him, rather, to his conclusions, drew his attention to the role of Transjordan in the struggle for Palestine, forced him to reexamine his own assumptions, as well as the assumptions of previous historians. (Shlaim is only one of a number of Israeli revisionists who are subjecting their people's received legends and accepted truths to the scrutiny of history. One day we may hear from Palestinian revisionists, too.)

The word "collusion" in Shlaim's title gives away his thesis. It is that a special Hashemite-Zionist relationship thrived across the Jordan River. The Jews created their own independent state, Abdullah helped himself to what remained of Palestine, and the "Palestine option"—a Palestinian state alongside Israel—never materialized. It fell victim, Shlaim believes, to the alliance between the Hashemites and the Zionists. The Zionists were bent upon bypassing the Palestinians, and Abdullah was available for a "strategic relationship with the Jewish Agency and the State of Israel."

No saint, Abdullah Ibn Hussein. But even as his biographers pick his record apart, we are left with the portrait of a man possessed of an extraordinary sense of realism and moderation. Abdullah's is a vanished world. His ornate, charming ways, his willingness to strike a bargain and to look beyond differences, are typical of a Middle Eastern political culture that has been blown away. "Land-grabber" that he was, Abdullah provided a kind of solution to the impasse between Arab and Jew in Palestine. We who sit in judgment on him, and in judgment on the political culture and methods of his time, must do so with modesty. Abdullah was a fox; but deadlier

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beasts are on the loose in the region. The politics of zeal reigns supreme. We have lived to long for the politics of cunning, for the sly, saving bargain.

The British loved bedouins. They thought that bedouins were authentic and noble, and hated townsmen, who were fake and effete. It was a desert version of their preference for the "martial races" in India. Abdullah, playing to the British gallery, played the bedouin. But that was kitsch. In fact he was a product of two distinctly urban environments: Mecca, where he was born in 1882, and Istanbul, where he spent 16 years of his youth. He was born to a religious caste, a *Sharif*, a descendant of the Prophet. In the year of Abdullah's birth his great-uncle held the office of Sharif of Mecca, which included the guardianship over the holy places of Islam. A feud between his great-uncle and his father, Sharif Hussein Ibn Ali, "unraveled the 'cocoon' of Abdullah's childhood in Mecca." In 1891 his father was summoned to Istanbul, the imperial capital by the Ottoman sultan, where he was to stay for 18 years, "part guest, part prisoner." Abdullah and his two brothers, Ali and Faisal, joined their father in early 1893, about the time of Abdullah's 11th birthday.

Abdullah and his brothers lived in Istanbul for 16 years, in a house on the Bosporus, provided by the sultan. It was the twilight of empire. "Reform" had been unleashed in the center, and it had stirred up the great city: printing presses, books, new universities, a tug-of-war between an old, bureaucratic tradition and European winds of change. Abdullah loved Istanbul. "Istanbul's beauty," he was to write in his memoirs, "seduced all men." It was a city where "Muslims from every corner of the world gathered; no man was a stranger in Istanbul; you could find there what your heart desired." (Years later, suffocated by Amman, this "bedouin" complained of life in the "wilderness of Transjordania.")

Abdullah's world was the world of the old Ottoman elite. He lamented the passing of the imperial age, and observed the coming of nationalism with suspicion. The politics he knew were court politics. Court intrigue played a role in his father's favor in 1908, the year of the "Young Turk" revolt by junior Ottoman officers. Hussein Ibn Ali was appointed Sharif of Mecca, and the sojourn of the Hashemites in Istanbul was over. The history of the "Arab Revolt," which pitted the Hashemites in Mecca on the side of Great Britain against the Ottoman empire in the First World War, need not detain us long; suffice it to say that in November 1914, the Young Turks took their country into war on the

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side of the central powers. By then the young officers—zealous, committed to central control, to increasing Turkish domination of the multinational, multidenominational realm—had taken apart much of the Ottomanist culture of the ancien régime. The restraints and the scruples of the old order, such as they were, were set aside, shattering the bonds of loyalty in this polyglot culture. Whole populations, the Arabs among them, were politically orphaned by the collapse of the imperial system.

In this fluid environment, the Hashemites in the Hijaz had something to offer. Britain wanted a Muslim cover in its war against the Turks. The Sharif and his sons were an ideal cover. The Sharif of Mecca had straddled the fence between Britain and the Turks, had sought the best terms for himself and his family. Finally, in June 1916, Sharif Hussein cast his lot with the British. His decision was made easier by the secularism of the Young Turks, by their increasing emphasis on the Turkish component of the empire, by their intrusion into his turf in the Hijaz.

The Hashemites were men of no mean ambition. The Sharif had himself declared "King of the Arabs." He saw himself and his sons as the inheritors of the Arab domains of the Ottoman Empire. The British indulged Sharif Hussein, though they thought that he was a comic figure, a stubborn old man. With a war to conduct, the British left their alliance with the Hashemites open-ended and ambiguous. Some of the old hands of the empire knew that time was running out on the Hashemite base in the Hijaz, that Hashemite rule was vulnerable to a more serious contender, a real desert ruler called Ibn Saud of Najd.

Though it was Abdullah who was most eager for a Hashemite alliance with the British, the colonial officials and soldiers who ran Britain's Arab affairs favored his younger brother Faisal. Faisal was the darling of T. E. Lawrence, of Gertrude Bell, of other Britons who dealt with the Hashemites. For Lawrence, the affair with Faisal was love at first sight: "I felt at first glance that this was the man I had come to Arabia to seek—the leader who would bring the Arab revolt to full glory." An Englishman's dream: "tall, graceful, vigorous, almost regal in appearance. Far more imposing personally than any of his brothers, knows it and trades on it . . . a very efficient man of business."

Abdullah, by contrast, received a less generous review. He was short and stocky; he was indolent, Lawrence complained, he loved games, practical jokes, had a court fool at hand. He would "ride a little, shoot a little, return exhausted to his tent for a massage." Abdullah cheated at chess, another Briton complained. No wonder, then, that Faisal received the throne of Iraq after his short-lived "Arab Kingdom" (October 1918-1920) was devastated by the French, who claimed Syria as their own domain. Abdullah had to settle for the "vacant lot" that was Transjordan.

Iraq's throne was thought to be Abdullah's so long as Faisal's claim to Damascus stood. When French armor put to an end the fragile Hashemite enterprise in Damascus, Faisal was put up for the Iraqi throne. At loose ends, Abdullah left his home in the Hijaz in November 1920 and marched north to the barren territory east of the Jordan. He arrived at the town of Ma'an, then moved on to Amman. He came with a force of 300 men and six machine guns. His aim, he said, was to liberate Damascus from the French.

Winston Churchill, the colonial secretary, loved to brag that he created Transjordan in an afternoon, in March 1921. That was close to the truth. The talks between Abdullah and Churchill lasted three days. There had been all sorts of ideas as to what to do with that barren territory. Sir Herbert Samuel, high commissioner in Palestine, had wanted it integrated into the mandate in Palestine. There were also fears that the French might extend their Syrian possessions to include the territory east of the Jordan. Churchill settled the matter. Abdullah was to be designated the Amir of Transjordan and granted a modest British subsidy.

In the talks with Churchill, which were

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Intellectuals

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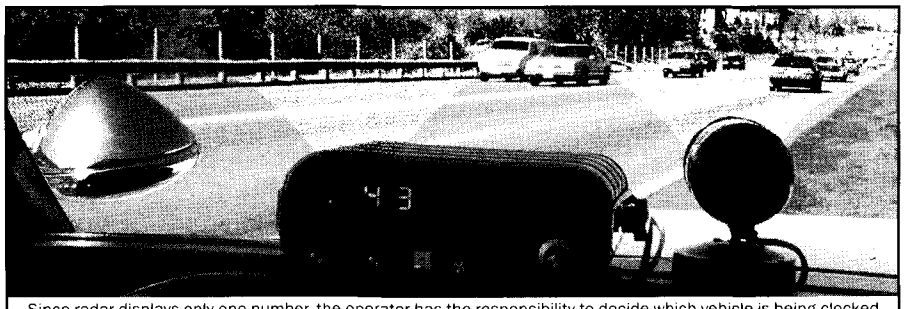
held in Jerusalem, Abdullah had asked for the unification of Palestine and Transjordan. He was rebuffed. He was granted his principality east of the Jordan on condition that his realm be kept "clear of anti-French and anti-Zionist agitation." Churchill talked vaguely of assistance in realizing that dream. British Transjordan would be a convenient buffer state, a way of repaying old debts to the Hashemites. For Abdullah, it was only the beginning. He did not have much to work with. Wilson notes that Transjordan, in 1921, was a territory with a population of some 230,000, "no real city, no natural resources, and no importance to trade except as a desert thoroughfare." Amman, the capital, was a small town of 2,500 to 5,000 inhabitants.

The Hashemite ruler was a relative stranger in his domain. Communities of political exiles—Palestinians at odds with the mandatory authorities, Syrians on the run from the French, Hijazis who came with Abdullah—were the props of the prince's regime. "He was able to keep Transjordanians at arm's length, away from formal institutions of power," Wilson notes. At first Abdullah tried to navigate between the political exiles and his British overlords. But rebellious tribes at home and attacks against his realm from the Wahhabi forces of Ibn Saud in 1923 and 1924—challenges that the British put down—drove home the realities of his dependence on British support. He made the best of his dependence and worked around it. For their part, the British, who had come close to scrapping the principality of Transjordan a mere six months after it had been set up, grew increasingly appreciative of Abdullah. Troubles in Palestine, the rise of the Wahhabis, with their brand of fanatic Islam, in Central Arabia, turned Transjordan and its British-commanded Arab legion into valuable assets. Abdullah was a spendthrift and a born intriguer, but he and Pax Britannica would stick it out to the bitter end.

A contemporary of Abdullah described the Hashemite prince of Transjordan as a "falcon trapped in a canary's cage." For 30 years Abdullah tried to break out of the drabness and the limits of Transjordan. He coveted his ancestral land in the Hijaz, which Ibn Saud had conquered by 1925, and he eyed Iraq as well. In 1933, after the death of his brother Faisal, he sought a union of the two Hashemite realms. And always he sought the great prize: a throne in Damascus, kingship over "Greater Syria."

Palestine and its affairs eventually drew him across the river. He and the Zionists, who were consolidating their "national home," entered into the most tangled of relationships. Deception and self-deception were present in equal measure in the traffic between them. Each party had a script and a role for the other. Abdullah thought that he could offer the Jews a "Hebrew republic" under his tutelage. The Zionists reciprocated: their national home, they believed, extended to the principality east of the Jordan. The two "colluded" against other players and then the collusion unraveled. Money changed hands: but there were, too, relationships of genuine affection between the Hashemite dynast and the Jewish Arabists. Raw power and force had their place in that relationship, but so did guile and bargaining. The two sides went to war in 1948. But it was, as Shlaim demonstrates with awesome detail, a war within limits, without heady delusions and crazy claims.

To his early relationship with the Zionists, Abdullah brought the self-confidence and the moderation that was exemplified by the old Ottoman regime



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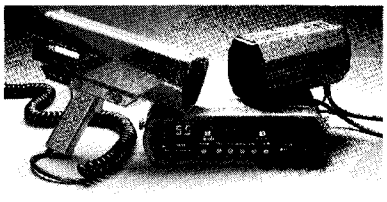

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in dealing with its minorities. The man who had grown up in Istanbul had known Jewish financiers and physicians and merchants. He was free of religious venom or prejudice. Still, he knew nothing of the new breed of Zionists at work in Palestine. A Zionist interlocutor of Abdullah's summed up Abdullah's attitude toward the Jews in Palestine and their place in his scheme of things: "Providence had scattered the Jews throughout the West in order that they might absorb Western culture and bring it back to the Middle East with them, thus contributing to its renaissance." A year after he got his principality in Transjordan, Abdullah proposed to Chaim Weizmann that he, Abdullah, would support the Balfour Declaration if the Zionists accepted him as ruler of Palestine. In this "Semitic kingdom" on both banks of the Jordan River, Arab and Jew would live as equals. There would be no Jewish right of return to this Semitic kingdom; Arabs would remain a majority in Abdullah's realm.

The proposal was brushed aside. But the traffic between the Zionists and Amman had begun. As early as 1926, Abdullah invited the Zionist leadership to participate in the development of Transjordan: "We are poor and you are rich. Please come to Transjordan. I guarantee your safety." The division between Transjordan and Palestine, the Hashemite prince said, was "artificial and wasteful." The Jews, he knew, would have trouble reaching an "understanding with the Palestine Arabs." Their hope was an alliance with "the Arabs of Iraq, Transjordan, and Arabia." A year later Abdullah granted the Russian-born Pinhas Rutenberg a concession to set up a hydroelectric power plant at the confluence of the Jordan and Yarmuk rivers. And in 1929 a Jewish mining engineer from Siberia secured a concession to set up a chemical plant on the Dead Sea.

Representatives of the Jewish Agency were frequent visitors of the Hashemite prince. They eyed his realm, Shlaim writes, "as an outlet for Jewish settlement and as a refuge of last resort for Arabs displaced as a result of Jewish immigration to Palestine." He thought of them as fabulously rich and skilled in the ways of the modern world (though he thought that the kibbutzim were breeding grounds of bolshevism and debauchery). He was not "afraid of the Jews," he told the secretary of the Jewish Agency Executive in 1931; he was sure, he said, that Jews throughout the world would not give up what they had in Europe in order to starve in Palestine. Only a minority of Jews would come to Palestine, he assured his interlocutors.

There was a reckless streak in Abdullah. In 1933 he leased land of his own in the central Jordan Valley to the Jewish Agency. He was hounded for the deal in the Palestinian press, and criticized by the British. He made the necessary public denials, but persisted. Two years later the lease was renewed. Abdullah needed money at the time to foment troubles in the Hijaz against Ibn Saud; he was willing to run the risks of leasing land to the Zionists. And he was not alone. Other Transjordan landholders, tribal chieftains who held vast tracts of uncultivated land, were interested in the money and the agricultural skills of the Jews. These landholders even formed a political party of sorts that "openly voiced its conviction that only Jewish settlements could save the country from the scourge of starvation which had afflicted it in recent years." The British responded with a "Nationality Law" that banned the lease of land to non-citizens. But Abdullah's rivals in Palestine, men like the Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin Husseini (that devil straight out of hell, Abdullah called him), now had ammunition against him: he was a "friend" of the Jews, a traitor.

Abdullah's balancing act—courtship of the Jews, coordination with the British, solidarity with Palestinian sentiment dictated by "honor" and by his obligations as a Muslim ruler—required tact and luck, but also a tolerable level of conflict between Arab and Jew in Palestine. That he had until 1936-37. Then Jew and Arab headed into stormier seas. A general strike was called by the Palestinians in 1936. Civil disorder followed and was to rage, as the Arab Rebellion, intermittently until 1939. Abdullah braved the storm in 1937; he accepted the partition of Palestine recommended by a British commission of inquiry. In the Peel Commission report, the Arab parts of Palestine were assigned to Abdullah.

The Peel Commission's recommendations, of course, died on the vine. But Abdullah had positioned himself between the Zionists and the Palestinians. He appealed to the Palestinians to bring their rebellion to an end, and was rebuffed. He fared no better with the Jews when he recommended a moratorium on Jewish immigration. Then he ducked for cover as the rebellion grew in intensity. More than 3,000 Palestinians perished in the disorders. Whole towns and villages slipped out of the control of the British authorities. But the rebellion was doomed. The British finally put it down with great cruelty. Wholesale arrests and collective punishment were the order of the day; imperial authority was reasserted without mercy, without qualms. In 1939 alone, 100 Palestinians were hanged, and thousands were sent to prison.

The Arab Rebellion has become the stuff of legend. But it was an unmitigated disaster for the Palestinians. It was an act of self-immolation. After the fury came the hunger and the deprivation. Then came the Night of the Long Knives, when Palestinian society turned on itself and began the search for collaborators, for sacrificial lambs. (A memorable portrait can be found in Anton Shammas's brilliant *Arabesques*.) In retrospect, the 1936-39 rebellion sealed the fate of the Palestinians. For one thing, the Mufti of Jerusalem, the pre-eminent Palestinian leader, was forced into exile. Out of the country, in places like Lebanon, Iraq, and Hitler's Germany, the Mufti grew maximalist, embittered; he retained control over the politics of his community, but he was removed from the daily realities of his people.

By the time the rebellion was put down, in short, the serious contenders for Palestine were two: the Jews and Abdullah. This devastating outcome for the Palestinians was obscured by a Pyrrhic victory, the British "White Paper" of 1939, which came close to repudiating the Balfour Declaration. In the White Paper the Palestine Arabs were granted a virtual veto over Jewish immigration. Land sales were prohibited in large areas of Palestine. Most important, the British retreated from the notion of partition, promising the Palestine Arabs an independent state after ten years. The Jews were thunderstruck. But "incredible as it may seem," Shlaim writes, "the Arab Higher Committee headed by the Mufti also came out against the White Paper, in a move which was as damaging to its own course as it was consistent with the pattern of senseless rejectionism for which it was becoming notorious." Zionist diplomacy was more flexible. The way around the White Paper was provided by David Ben-Gurion in his famous formulation: "We will fight with the British against Hitler as if there were no White Paper. We will fight the White Paper as if there were no war."

Two years after the White Paper episode, the Mufti went to Berlin, where he stayed until the end of the Second World War. (The Führer thought well of the Mufti's fair hair and blue eyes, was convinced that the Mufti descended from the "best Roman stock.") Abdullah, however, stayed close to the British, anchored in political reality. Abdullah's Arab Legion helped put down an anti-British revolt in Iraq; it also fought against Vichy forces in Syria. The ruler in Amman came out of the war as Britain's reliable Arab ally. This would serve him well in

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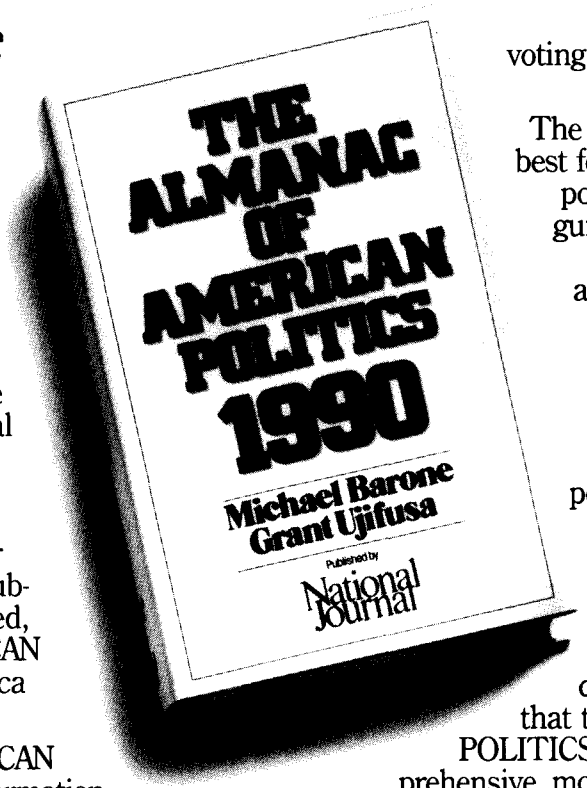

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the final push for Palestine. The British rewarded Abdullah by granting Transjordan its formal independence in 1946; and Abdullah had himself crowned king. Alerted by Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin in early 1946 that British withdrawal from Palestine was on the horizon, Abdullah threw himself with greater vigor than ever into the affairs of Palestine. Greater Syria was an elusive prize. Palestine was attainable.

"Partition and merger": this was the essence of the understanding between the Zionists and Abdullah. The Jews would get their state, the Arab parts of Palestine would go to Abdullah. Ben-Gurion nicknamed these two states "Judea" and "Abdallia." No borders were agreed upon, no written text was drafted. That kind of precision was not in the nature of things. There were skeptics in Zionists ranks, Ben-Gurion among them, who did not believe that Abdullah had much to deliver, that he could stay aloof from an Arab-Jewish war. Moreover, Ben-Gurion saw the Arab Legion as an instrument of British power. Deeply distrustful of British intentions, he worried that the regime in Amman was a stalking horse for British imperialism. But the opening to Amman was, finally, all that the Zionists had to work with in Arab matters.

There were two partition plans, Shlaim tells us, as 1947 drew to a close: a public plan born in New York, at the United Nations, which sanctioned a Jewish state and a Palestinian state side by side in mandatory Palestine; and a private plan, a "progeny of the unholy alliance between the Zionists and the Hashemites," pledged to a Jewish state and an annexation to Jordan of what remained of Palestine. Shlaim maintains that the second plan had the discreet backing and approval of Bevin. Informed by Abdullah's prime minister of his monarch's plan to send the Arab Legion across the Jordan when the mandate expired, Bevin responded: "It seems the obvious thing to do." Bevin then added the following caveat: "But do not go and invade the areas allotted to the Jews." By February 1948 Bevin had decided in favor of a Transjordanian bid in Palestine.

Events would soon reveal that there were no other Arab alternatives in Palestine. Palestinian society collapsed under the pressure of war. The flight of the middle and upper classes (December 1947-March 1948), the fall of the city of Haifa in April 1948, followed by the exodus of the entire Arab population of this mixed Jewish-Arab city, cruelly revealed the inadequacy of the Palestinian social structure. And the Haganah's policy of expulsion and "border clearings," as the Israeli historian Benny Morris has demonstrated in an important new book, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem 1947-1949*, soon overwhelmed the Palestinians. The League of Arab States had wanted to blunt Abdullah's advantage in Palestine, and had dispatched a volunteer force, the Arab Liberation Army. But this army, led by a poseur and adventurer by the name of Fawzi Qawukj, proved itself a burden to the Palestinians. It looted what was there to be looted, and was quickly eliminated as a fighting force.

Soon the Arab League itself would come to the same conclusion that the Zionist negotiators always returned to: that Abdullah enjoyed a special position in Palestine. By mid-April 1948, the Arab League, led by Abdullah's rivals, appealed for his intervention in Palestine. Then the Palestinians came forth, seeking his help and protection. It had been Abdullah's claim all along that his Arab rivals would not be there when it really mattered. "To me had fallen the honor to save Palestine," he declared in late April. He had other competitors for the honor, though, in the month to follow, when the Jews declared their state and the war broke out; the Iraqis, the Egyptians, the Syrians, even the Lebanese (the less said of the Lebanese the better, Abdullah used to say) sent their armies to Palestine. They came unprepared, pushed along, in Shlaim's words, by "the attitudes of the mob, by excessive emotionalism, by rumors and legends about the cowardice of the Jews, and the heroism of the Arabs." The Egyptians thought that the campaign would be a minor expedition, that the Egyptian army would quickly make its way to Tel Aviv.

Ben-Gurion had been sure all along that it would come to a general war, and he was prepared for it. He had been particularly worried about Abdullah's Arab Legion: this was the fighting force whose abilities he respected the most. Four days before the declaration of Israel's statehood, Ben-Gurion dispatched Golda Meir to Amman in an effort to keep Abdullah out of the war. Abdullah and the Jews were now beyond ornate protocol: Meir wanted to know if the understanding between them still held. The king was evasive; previously, he said, he had been alone, now other Arabs were involved and he was "one of five." He went back to his pet project—autonomy for the Jews in a larger kingdom ruled by himself. "We, the children of the Orient, must show this miracle to the world." Meir reported to Ben-Gurion that the king was "caught up in a web and did not know how to extricate himself." A few minutes before midnight, May 14-15, King Abdullah dispatched the Arab Legion across the Jordan.

"Peaceful partition" was not to be. Shlaim argues that the fight between the Transjordanians and the Jews was a limited war. Fighting broke out in Jerusalem, of course, between the Arab Legion and the Israeli forces. But Jerusalem had not been covered by an agreement between Abdullah and the Jews. "Each side," Shlaim writes, "kept its thoughts and its hopes to itself" on the matter of Jerusalem. The fight for Jerusalem transpired "precisely because it was not covered by any kind of agreement or understanding between the two sides." Everywhere else, that unwritten understanding between Abdullah and the Jews held, and "the Arab Legion respected the partition borders and made no attempt to seize Jewish territory."

Abdullah's Arab "allies" tried to draw him into a general war: that despised Arab Legion, that tool of British power, that laughable bedouin force, was called upon to avert a general Arab disaster in Palestine. But Abdullah was wily. He knew the deep divisions of the Arab coalition. He knew that the Egyptians who dominated the Arab League were gunning for him and opposed the enlargement of his realm, that the Syrians and the Lebanese were busy hatching conspiracies against him. And there was his old enmity with Ibn Saud. There was simply no way, then, that the regime in Amman could ward off its Arab troubles. The Arab Legion gave a credible military performance. But recriminations within the Arab coalition had begun even before the final disposition of Palestine had been decided.

Abdullah's Arab rivals struck in September 1948. At a meeting of the Arab League held in Egypt, they established the ill-fated "All-Palestine Government," with its seat in Gaza. This was an Egyptian-sponsored initiative (rather like the decision to set up the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1964). The Mufti of Jerusalem, away from Palestine for 11 years, returned to Gaza as president of the National Council of this government. The Egyptians had willed the "All-Palestine government" out of nothing. The phantom state went on to claim sovereignty over the whole of Palestine. It was duly recognized by Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia; even the other Hashemite regime in Iraq obliged the All-Palestine government. For its Egyptian creators, however, the sole purpose of this Palestinian instrument was the harassment of Abdullah.

The Transjordanians held their ground. They warned the Palestinians that the Egyptians would soon leave Pal-

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estine, that the fortunes of the Palestinians depended on their ties to Transjordan. Israel's campaign in the south, which opened in mid-October 1948 and ended in a devastating defeat for the Egyptians, left Abdullah as the undisputed Arab claimant in Palestine. So deep was the discord within Arab ranks that rumors spread of a Transjordanian-Israeli plot against Egypt.

Shlaim finds no evidence of such a plot. True, there was relief in Amman. Glubb Pasha, the commander of the Legion, thought that the Israeli campaign may finally "knock out the Gaza government and give the Gippies a lesson." But panic immediately followed in Amman. With the defeat of the Egyptians, the Arab Legion was virtually alone in Palestine. Abdullah feared that he might be the Israelis' next target. Any renewal of fighting raised the specter of the "annihilation" of the Arab Legion. Abdullah sought assurances from Britain. He found little comfort there. He was told that Britain would come to the rescue if Transjordan itself were attacked. The vulnerability of the Transjordanian position in Palestine was exposed.

Abdullah was on his own. He now had a powerful new incentive to resume diplomacy with Israel. For its part, Israel had a choice to make. There were peace feelers from Egypt. A debate ensued within the Israeli leadership between "Transjordan Firsters" and the "Egypt Firsters." The preference for Egypt was in some sense ideological, for the leftist members of Mampam believed that Egypt was an independent Arab government, while Transjordan was a British puppet. The case for Abdullah, though, was the one that stood the test of time: his readiness to make peace, his power on the ground. Abdullah probed the Israelis over Gaza, wanted it as his outlet to the sea. By the time the dust settled, the Egyptians were left in Gaza. Elsewhere in Arab Palestine, Abdullah held sway.

Ben-Gurion had critics within his community. Some believed that the Egyptians should have been driven out of Gaza. For others, the war of 1948-49 was "an unfinished war" in the center of the country, and in Jerusalem. In their view, the Arab Legion should have been pushed back across the Jordan. Shlaim adds a criticism of his own, a rather utopian one. He finds a fundamental flaw in Ben-Gurion's diplomacy, "a contradiction between Ben-Gurion's socialist convictions and his choice of Transjordan, one of the most economically backward and politically reactionary kingdoms in the Arab world, as Israel's principal partner in laying the foundations of the post-war order in the Middle East." This bit of revisionism is a little wanton: a new, weak, and alien state cannot be expected to have scoured the local landscape in search of "progressive" Arab forces.

By early 1949 the carnage on the battlefield had ended. Abdullah and the Zionists still had business to transact. Abdullah and the leaders of the Jewish state made short shrift of a U.N. attempt to put the city of Jerusalem under international control, an objective shared by the Soviet bloc, the Vatican and the Catholic countries, and the Islamic and Arab states. Shlaim notes the irony of the Arab states that had rejected the original U.N. partition plan turning into such "enthusiastic proponents of a U.N. regime for the city." Abdullah understood that his Arab rivals were attempting to deprive him of what he had secured in the holy city. The Transjordanians and the Israelis dug in. The plan withered away.

But it did not always work this way between Abdullah and the Israelis. There were also those "three nights of Shuneh," the king's winter residence, in May 1949, when Abdullah negotiated at gunpoint. Three of Israel's soldiers (Yigael Yadin, Moshe Dayan, Yehoshafat Harkabi) and a professional diplomat (Walter Eytan) sought and secured from Abdullah a substantial modification of the border in Wadi Ara, across the Hadera-Afuleh road. The message delivered by Yadin was straightforward: Israel's terms or the resort to arms. Abdullah accepted Israel's terms. It was better to sacrifice a few villages than to lose the territory Transjordan had secured. Typically, he told "a bedouin tale" to his troubled advisers. If you are fleeing from your enemy on your horse, with all your possessions, and you see that your enemy is upon you, it is the wiser course to throw some parcels to your enemy as you continue to flee. "And I want you to know that I have invited our Israeli friends in order to throw parcels to them."

Could Israel have behaved differently after its victory in 1948? Was there, for Israel, a Palestinian option? The "Palestinian option" is a matter of particular interest to Shlaim. The cables and the memoranda he unearths are fascinating, not least because we have come to see this conflict as one of total enmity between Israeli and Palestinian. Yet it turns out that Israeli leaders did talk of a Palestinian option, that they did consider that a smaller Palestinian state west of the Jordan might be preferable to a larger Arab state on both banks of the Jordan. A larger Arab state on both banks of the

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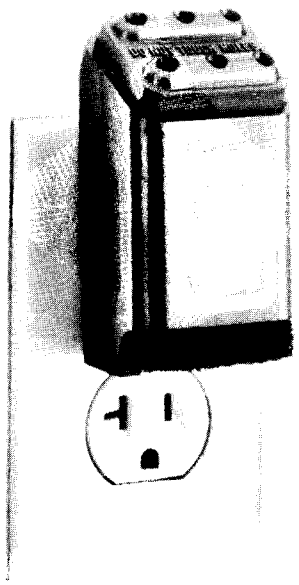

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Jordan, some Zionist leaders feared, could come under the influence of an Iraqi regime deeply hostile to Israel. The Israeli leaders were convinced of Abdullah's commitment to peace, but they suspected that he was a marked man.

Some Palestinian interlocutors came forth, said they were willing to work with the Jews, even sought Israeli protection and patronage against Abdullah. An organization representing the refugees, the Ramallah Refugee Office, headed by an anti-Husseini political figure by the name of Muhammad Hawari, turned up in Lausanne during the 1949 armistice talks between Israel and the delegations of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. Some of the Mufti's men came as well. So did a group representing "propertied refugees," who wished to talk about what they had left behind, about bank accounts and the reunification of families. The Israeli negotiators at Lausanne met with Hawari's group, and with the "propertied refugees." The Arabs shunned them as collaborators, which in Hawari's case was true. (Hawari's hotel and restaurant bill were picked up by Elias Sasson, a representative of the Jewish Agency.) Hawari talked bravely of rebellions against Jordan, of a Palestinian authority in exile that would work with Israel. He asked for right of asylum in Israel for Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank who were at odds with their Egyptian and Jordanian rulers. The Israeli delegates cabled home, and received word that Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett agreed "in principle" to Hawari's plan.

But Sharett knew that Hawari and the propertied refugees were broken men. He also knew that discussions with the Palestinians ran the risk of reviving the U.N. partition plan of November 1947, and its smaller borders. It was one thing to talk to the Palestinian refugees as a way of putting pressure on Abdullah, quite another to midwife a Palestinian entity. "Of all the brave talk about a Palestinian government-in-exile, of a struggle for independence, of a separate or a ministate nothing was put into action." Palestinian society had disintegrated. Its politics was trapped between men like the Mufti and men like Hawari. It is a measure of the collapse of Palestinian society that the Zionists themselves should have been asked to bring a Palestinian state into existence in 1948-49.

"We are not contractors for the building of an independent Arab state" was Ben-Gurion's response to the debate about Israel's Palestine option. "We believe this is a matter for the Arabs themselves." Nationalism is not a gift that one people can make to another. It is, above all, about self-help; and that is where the Palestinians failed, and lost their luck. They depended on the Arabs, then resented them when the Arabs failed to deliver, then loathed themselves. Palestinian politics alternated between exaltation and flight. Euphoria in 1939, panic less than a decade later.

Rahat Filastin: Palestine was lost. Now the ruler in Amman was the demon. This was particularly convenient for the Egyptians, who wanted no audit of their performance in the war, who looked away in horror from the verdict that the war delivered on their society. Recent converts to the cause of Arab nationalism, the Egyptians had entered the Palestinian conflict with some reluctance. But they found themselves throwing good money after bad, and they grew shrill. They hounded Abdullah in public, even as they probed the Israeli leaders quietly for an Egyptian-Israeli settlement. The theme of Abdullah's "treason" played well in Syria, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, among Palestinian refugees looking for a scapegoat, and in turbulent Iraq. Abdullah pushed on with the business at hand: the incorporation of the West Bank into his realm. "Union" between the two banks of the Jordan was formalized in April 1950. His claim to the West Bank was rejected by other Arabs. (It was recognized only by Britain and Pakistan.)

Abdullah had his larger realm, and he had East Jerusalem. But now he ruled an unwieldy enterprise. He had made his peace with the tribes of Transjordan, but his new subjects—the Palestinians on the West Bank, the refugees who had flocked east of the Jordan—owed him no love or loyalty. They offered him their tokens of obedience, but they hated him. Abdullah wanted to conclude a final settlement with Israel. His ministers refused to go along (a foreshadowing of Sadat's Cabinet). The king was told that everywhere there was a thirst for revenge, that no one wanted to make peace with the victorious Jewish state. He was held back by his British advisers, who feared that a close relationship between Abdullah and Israel might weaken their own power over him.

Abdullah had gotten what he wanted out of the war. He was anxious to have the status quo ratified, to avoid a full-scale confrontation with Israel. But an overall settlement with Israel was beyond his power. He was left with the possible, and its attendant risks: an armistice, a long border hard to control, a fear of raids conducted from his side of the border, a fear of Israeli reprisals. This peace was "retail" rather than "wholesale." But it was better than the alternatives.

For Abdullah, the end came in Jerusalem in the summer of 1951. It was an "ill-starred year" for Jordan, according to Shlaim, a year of scarcity, of unemployment. There was an atmosphere of rancor. The campaign of vilification against Abdullah finally served as a warrant for his murder. Palestine had become an occasion for shame; and shame, as Arabs say, can only be washed with blood. In mid-July a Lebanese politician, a Sunni

Nine Cities

Glass chimes fashioned in Venice
are tinkling in a window
on the other side of the world
and you can hear them

in Lhasa, where the sapphire
light tints the mountain
peaks at dusk, making
you wince with pleasure

on a New York rooftop
stargazing past the silhouettes
of the water towers
on a night so black you tremble

in Rome under a street lamp
by the Temple of Mars
where the iron eagles glare
and the sparrows sing so sweetly

that you weep in Kyoto on a stone
bench beside rain-drenched ferns,
listening to Mozart's *Requiem*
and sifting through your memories

of Stockholm in winter: skating
across the frozen lake at dawn
and drinking Kir in the park
when the equestrian statues leaped high

suddenly like the dancers in Guayaquil
who work the snow-white beaches
with marimba bands on fiery afternoons,
their hair burning scarlet

as the cactus flowers in Santa Fe
the girls are picking
on the edge of the desert
where all the car radios are blaring

"Moscow Nights" and you're tapping
your foot in time on the other
side of the world—chimes flashing
moonlight in the window.

Nicholas Christopher

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prime minister, was murdered in Amman. A week later, on Friday, Abdullah went to pray at Al Aqsa Mosque in the Old City, accompanied by his grandson Hussein; and on the grounds of the mosque a young Palestinian assassin, a tailor's apprentice with a criminal record, shot him in the head.

Abdullah remained a fatalist to the end. He had been warned of plots against him, but had replied with an Arabic proverb: "Until my day comes nobody can harm me: When the day comes nobody can guard me." There was jubilation in some of the refugee camps: the "traitor" had been punished. The assassination was not the deed of a lone assassin. A wider conspiracy most likely involved Abdullah's old rival, Hajj Amin Husseini, and perhaps Egyptian paymasters as well.

I was six when Abdullah was murdered. My generation of Arabs inherited the view of Abdullah peddled by his detractors, by those who saw his assassins as men who did their "patriotic" duty. Reflecting on Avi Shlaim's book, one sees what swindles are passed along to the unsuspecting. The political men in the Arab world who cursed Abdullah and turned away from him took a ruinous path. They gave dreadful names to the most ordinary of human and political encounters. They turned politics into a universe of heroes, saints, and devils. They cornered and imprisoned themselves, and they have had an awful time coming back to a political world where the actors are only men and the outcomes only the messy compromises that men learn to live with. Shlaim did not set out to rehabilitate Abdullah. But the moral drawn by readers of this great tale is beyond the storyteller's power.

The Argument of the Eye

BY RICHARD JENKYNS

Modern Painters by John Ruskin edited and abridged by David Barrie

(Knopf, 704 pp., $45)

There is a familiar story that can be told about many of the great Victorians. It begins with the sage, prophet, or man of letters, revered in his lifetime; there follows a slump in his reputation, as the Victorians become figures of fun, in the age of Lytton Strachey and the Bloomsberries; and finally he is restored to fame and public favor with the rediscovery of 19th-century virtues in our own day. At first sight Ruskin seems to fit this pattern (though, as we shall see, with a difference). In his lifetime his prestige was enormous; no art critic has commanded such a reverential audience. With success on such a scale, we should look not just for an explanation in the qualities of the individual, but for some way in which he answered to the needs and aspirations of his time.

Ruskin's gift to his age was to reconcile the impulses of art and religion, to the mutual ennoblement of each. The Evangelical tradition, in which he was himself raised, tended to regard art with suspicion, as a sort of frippery. Ruskin argued that the making and the enjoyment of good art were moral acts, and even a kind of worship: in *Modern Painters* he maintains that the art that does not reveal the Creator's working in the world stands condemned. Conversely, the cultured middle classes who were visiting the churches and galleries of continental Europe in ever increasing numbers, thanks to the spread of the railways and their own swelling prosperity, wanted not entertainment but improvement. (John Pemble's recent and delightful book about the Victorians in the south, *The Mediterranean Passion*, illustrates this very clearly.) Ruskin taught them that they could have something much better still, a profound spiritual enrichment. All the expense and discomfort were worthwhile, after all; indeed, they were even virtuous.

By the age of 40, signs of mental unbalance were already appearing in Ruskin, and his powers began to decline. Yet at this time he was acquiring a new platform as the first Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford and a new reputation as a prophet of guild socialism (a Trades Union college at Oxford is named after him; with characteristic eccentricity he began his last book, "I am, as my father was before me, a violent Tory of the old school . . ."). His Slade lectures grew

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more and more bizarre, and on one occasion he showed his audience a picture of a pig, explaining it as the type of the Protestant Church. After that his friends persuaded him to retire. For the last ten years of his long life he spoke barely a word, but dwelled in silence beside Coniston Water in the English Lakeland, glooming into his long white beard, guarded and tended by his devoted cousin, Joan Severn.

Yet even though his works grew dottier, they continued to be published, and with reason, for flashes of the old genius might always come through. *Fors Clavigera*, a series of letters addressed to English working people, includes some very fine things, and his last, uncompleted work, *Praeterita*, written in between attacks of brain fever, contains some of the most luminous pages of autobiography ever written. Gladstone (whom Ruskin detested) was tempted to make him poet laureate after Tennyson's death, even though he was by then demented.

Ruskin's was still a very great name at the end of the last century and the beginning of this, with countless volumes of his works printed, soon to clutter the back rooms of secondhand bookshops. I have many volumes of Ruskin, bought for a pound or so apiece, dating mostly from between 1880 and 1910—evidence that he was still much admired during this period. Sometimes, perhaps, he was more honored than read: I had to cut most of the pages of *Modern Painters* myself. (There is a certain dark pleasure in breaching a virginity that has lasted 100 years.) Still, there were editions for every taste and pocket; sensible dark green cloth bindings for the standard octavos, limp red leather for the pocket editions, red cloth for the miniature version.

By the end of the Edwardian age, his reputation had become more equivocal. In *A Room with a View*, first published in 1908, E. M. Forster describes his young heroine Lucy Honeychurch stranded in Santa Croce in Florence without her Baedeker, with "no one even to tell her which, of all the sepulchral slabs that paved the nave and transepts, was the one that was really beautiful, the one that had been most praised by Mr. Ruskin." For this simpleminded teenager Ruskin is still a god, but the sophisticated Forster is now including him in the irony with which he views poor Lucy: we catch the curl of a cultivated lip in the formal "Mr." attached to Ruskin's name. Bloomsbury despised the Victorians for their moralism, and none was more moralistic than Ruskin.

For many years Ruskin was forgotten, or remembered only because of a prurient interest in his unhappy marriage, annulled on the grounds of nonconsummation after his wife fell in love with the painter Millais. Now he is admired once more, and an enormous academic industry has grown up around him. But there is a difference between him and the other rehabilitated Victorians: he is honored, but he remains unread. The problem lies, perhaps, in his quantity and his variability. Some of his books are sentimental or silly: avoid *Sesame and Lilies*, and probably *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* too, unless you have already been converted. Of his finest works, *Unto This Last*, his diatribe against political economy, and *Praeterita* are of manageable size and superbly readable, but his masterpiece *The Stones of Venice* is immensely long, and *Modern Painters* longer still.

A shortened edition is, therefore, very welcome, the more since, unlike *The Stones of Venice*, it contains many longueurs and repetitions. David Barrie provides a good introduction, but surely he deceives himself when he says that "to the real Ruskin enthusiast . . . every word is a joy." The abridgement seems to me tactfully and sensibly done, and the new book has the advantage over the original in the inclusion of color plates, which are of good quality. (The same cannot be said of the black-and-white illustrations, which tend to be murky.)

Modern Painters is a vast, ramshackle edifice, not easily described. Perhaps Ruskin himself can help us do the job. In a magnificent chapter of *The Stones of Venice*, he listed the six "characteristic or moral" elements of the gothic builder: Savageness or Rudeness, Love of Change, Love of Nature, Disturbed Imagination, Obstinacy, Generosity. Whether or not this is a good picture of the Middle Ages, one can hardly help noticing that he is describing himself rather well, and one of the reasons for the mesmeric effect he has on his admirers is surely that he is entwined into his subject with a fury of personal engagement. None of his works is more "gothic" than the sprawling, unequal, sometimes superb bulk of *Modern Painters*.

Written in five volumes over a period of some 20 years, it resembles one of those medieval cathedrals Ruskin so loved: we pass from the romanesque nave to the early gothic chancel, before turning aside to admire the transepts added in the last years of the Middle Ages. The first volume came out in 1842, when he was only 24. It was the product of a boyish passion for Turner; indeed, he had originally intended to call it *Turner and the Ancients*, and his comparatively uninteresting discussions of other English painters (slashed by Barrie) were added to make the book more attractive to the publisher. Later volumes expanded into aesthetics, medieval and Renaissance art, poetry (the third volume is a masterpiece of literary criticism, and gave us the "pathetic fallacy"), the study of geology and landscape, and finally a doom-laden blend of politics and religion.

According to the new *Oxford Companion to English Literature*, the last volume was written when Ruskin was "embarking on a vital old age." This is bad news for many of us, since he was only 40 when the work was completed. Still, the mistake is revealing, because *Modern Painters* seems to contain a whole lifetime of changing experience. It begins like this, with the porty orotundity of the 18th century (strange to think that its author was then barely out of university):

> If it be true, and it can scarcely be disputed, that nothing has been for centuries consecrated by public admiration, without possessing in a high degree some kind of sterling excellence, it is not because the average intellect and feeling of the majority of the public are competent in any way to distinguish what is really excellent, but because all erroneous opinion is inconsistent, and all ungrounded opinion transitory . . .

By the end of the fifth volume it has become like this:

> Yes, Albert of Nuremberg; the time has at last come. Another nation has arisen in the strength of its Black anger; and another hand has portrayed the spirit of its toil. Crowned with fire, and with the wings of the bat.

What had happened to Ruskin in between? Well, for one thing he had read Carlyle; but the hypnotic influence of Carlyle's eccentric style can hardly in itself account for so profound a change. An unkind answer would be that Ruskin was already starting to go off his head, and it would not be wholly wrong: the last chapters of *Modern Painters* are thick with Greek mythology, a subject that always sent him spinning off into whirls of wild, private symbolism. A more respectful view would be that he was possessed by a prophetic rage. His opinions had been shaken by a series of earthquakes. He had lost faith in the Evangelicalism of his youth. (Not in religion itself, as is commonly said; the last volume is far more centrally and passionately religious than the first.) Seeing Veronese had converted him from a puritan view of art (the first volume asserts the unimportance of color) to a belief in the glory of sensuousness. And he had begun his social crusade: politics and art come together in "The Two Boyhoods," the chief tour de

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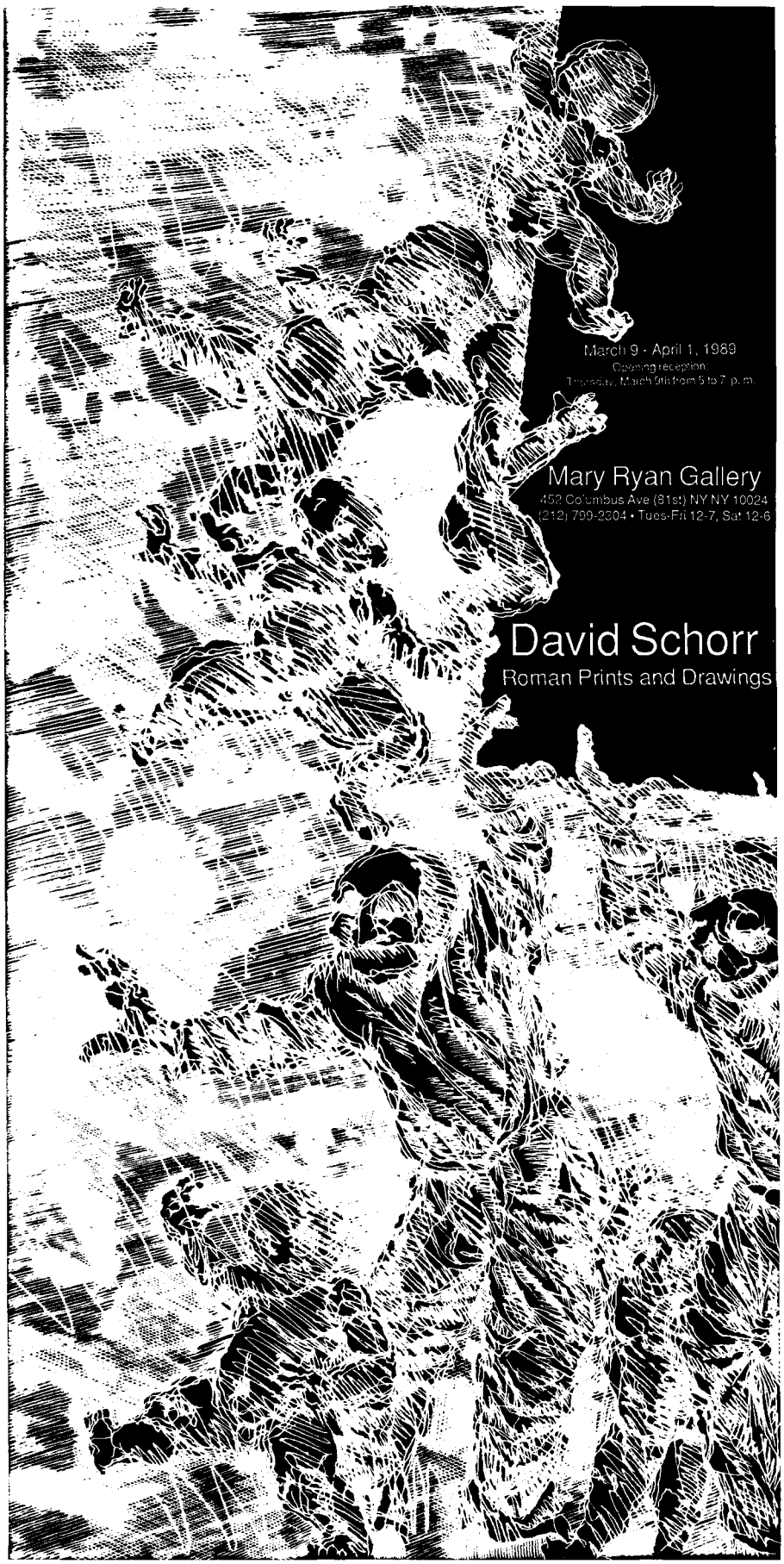
force of the fifth volume, in which Giorgione's youth in Venice, a city of marble set in a sparkling sea, is contrasted with Turner's upbringing in the grimy back streets of Covent Garden.

In some ways, therefore, *Modern Painters* is chaotic. What perhaps holds it together, makes it most durably valuable, is the "argument of the eye." Few writers can make us see things more clearly and intensely. This quality is seen at its finest in *The Stones of Venice*. The whole of the first volume, some 350 pages, is a single argument: the method is to look at the different elements of a building one by one—wall, cornice, shaft, capital—and deduce from first principles with what shape and proportion they should be made. He is forever turning to address the reader. How would you build this part? he keeps asking. Wouldn't you do such-and-such? How simple it all is, really. The reader is carried along by what seems a tone of relentless common sense.

In *Modern Painters*, by contrast, he bullies us into looking hard at Turner, Claude, Poussin, Salvator Rosa, and the rest to see how truthfully they have depicted nature. This means that he has to look at nature itself, and hundreds of pages are devoted to studying, with an unmatched intensity and purity of vision, the forms of clouds, the shapes of an Alpine peak, the curve of a leaf, the twist and texture of water flowing from the edge of a lake or hurling itself into a cascade. Here we meet a combination of scientific precision and poetic insight that no other English writer can equal. For a comparable gift, one must turn to Ruskin's great admirer, Proust. The matter is banally put by saying that Ruskin is a master of English prose: true, but he is a master of prose not just because of his dazzling technique, but because he uses it to show us the world.

His theory of art may seem most dated in its moralism. Certainly as a teenager in the 1960s I was taught to think that the association of good art with good morals, for which Ruskin argues, was an absurdity, merely laughable. Yet this aspect of Ruskin, too, is enjoying a revival. He is the hero of Peter Fuller's new book, *Theoria*, for the very reason that he insisted upon art's moral and spiritual dimension. (Fuller has also started a magazine called *Modern Painters*.) And surely it is true that there is some connection between art and the moral quality of the artist or his society.

The picture of Mozart given in Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus*, for example, is false as well as vulgar, not because great artists are necessarily good men, not because they can never have a childish or disgust-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ing side, but because Mozart could not have been utterly vacuous in quite that way: the man who wrote the Countess's forgiveness in *Figaro* or the initiation music in *The Magic Flute* needed to have at least some quality of moral insight that is incompatible with total spiritual emptiness. The glad news that any clapped-out punk can write *Cosi* is wrong. The connection between art and moral character may not be a comfortable one: the very excellence of Beardsley's drawings is inseparable from his knowledge of evil, not because some of them have obscene subjects but because of something in the style itself. It was a weakness of Ruskin that he disliked unpleasantness (Murillo's peasants have such nasty dirty feet), but it was a strength that he saw that the man and the artist cannot be wholly dissevered.

It is easy enough to score off Ruskin. He was wrong about an extraordinarily large number of things. To be sure, he gave himself more chances to be wrong than most of us, since he was an incurable know-it-all and congenitally didactic (he delivered his first sermon at the age of three: "People, be good"). *Unto This Last* is a brilliant tract, scathing and moving, but willful in its utter refusal to understand what political economy was trying to do. He was right about Turner, but wrong about almost all the other painters of his time, seeing no special distinction in Constable, and comparing such men as Stannard and Copley Fielding to Titian and Tintoretto, not always to their disadvantage. He was brilliant on Byzantine and medieval Italian buildings, but blind to spatial values, uncomprehending of illusionistic or paradoxical architecture, and hopelessly unfair to the Renaissance and the baroque. Like some other English aesthetes, he was also an architectural Anglophobe, belittling or ignoring the masterpieces of English gothic and preferring Italian buildings of lesser quality.

And yet he remains a genius. As his mentor Carlyle once said, the question is not how much chaff is in you, but whether there is any wheat. Ruskin is at once narrow and capacious. His follies and his blindnesses are the defects of an intuitive imagination that enabled him at best to describe and to analyze with a blend of accuracy and poetry surpassing any critic who has ever lived. Like many of the Victorian sages, his tone is commonly bleak, angry, or despondent; and yet in the end I think that he is one of the yea-sayers. A kind of optimism seems to bubble up through even his most apocalyptic prose. Late in life, when he added a short epilogue to a new edition of *Modern Painters*, he repeated an aphorism of two decades before: "All great Art is Praise." It began as a book about art; it became a celebration of the whole created order.

The luck of genius was with him at the last. *Praeterita* was broken off, unfinished, yet it ends perhaps more perfectly than any work of English prose I can think of. The great loves of his life—art, nature, Italy—come together, as he tells how with his American friend Charles Norton he watched the fireflies among the Tuscan hills:

> *How* they shone! moving like fine-broken starlight through the purple leaves. How they shone! through the sunset that faded into thunderous night as I entered Siena three days before, the white edges of the mountainous clouds still lighted from the west, and the openly golden sky calm behind the Gate of Siena's heart, with its still golden words, 'Cor magis tibi Sena pandit' [Siena opens its heart the more to you], and the fireflies everywhere in sky and cloud rising and falling, mixed with lightning, and more intense than the stars.

RICHARD JENKYNS is the author of *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Harvard University Press).

Light in Darkness

BY JOSEF ŠKVORECKÝ

The Encyclopedia of the Dead by Danilo Kiš translated by Michael Henry Heim

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 199 pp., $17.95)

A war, as Hemingway believed, is the best teacher of creative writing there is. There is death in Danilo Kiš. His new collection of stories is a very beautiful *Necronomicon*, a book of dead names, of forgotten names now made unforgettable by an extraordinary writer. (Kiš is to be congratulated for his translator, who displays all the original's richness of texture and freshness of detail.) It is no wonder. Kiš is a Jew who grew up in Yugoslavia, in one of the bloodiest parts of Europe during the killing years of Nazism; and that domain of death did not really end with the passing of the Nazi era, but continued, diminished, throughout the years of the "more equal among the equals," the decades of pompous cults and anonymous tragedies.

A shadow of death darkens this book, but it is a beautiful shadow and a luminescent darkness. Let me illustrate what I mean by a lengthy quotation from "Simon Magus," the opening story, a fresh reworking of a traditional Gnostic legend:

> And now let me collect my strength and my thoughts and focus with everything I have on the horror of our earthly existence, on the imperfection of the world, on the myriad lives torn asunder, on the beasts that devour one another, on the snake that bites a stag as it grazes in the shade, on the wolves that slaughter sheep, on the mantises that consume their males, on the bees that die once they sting, on the mothers who labor to bring us into the world, on the blind kittens children toss into rivers, on the terror of the fish in the whale's entrails and the terror of the beaching whale, on the sadness of an elephant dying of old age, on the butterfly's fleeting joy, on the deceptive beauty of the flower, on the fleeting illusion of a lover's embrace, on the horror of spilt seed, on the impotence of the aging tiger, on the rotting of teeth in the mouth, on the myriad dead leaves lining the forest floor, on the fear of the fledgling when its mother pushes it out of the nest, on the infernal torture of the worm baking in the sun as if roasting in living fire, on the anguish of a lovers' parting, on the horror known by lepers, on the hideous metamorphoses of women's breasts, on wounds, on the pain of the blind . . .

The Encyclopedia of the Dead abounds in such passages. They can be labeled, surely, "lyrical prose," but that tells very little about their magic, and about the history of how this particular kind of prose came about in the raw and epic genre of fiction, which once relied almost exclusively on strong plots and often grotesquely mimetic characters. It seems that an undercurrent of poetic intensity slowly seeped through the wordy rivers, shaped ever so painstakingly by Thackeray's anguish over a single paragraph a day; by Flaubert's endless search for the word that would do justice to the world; by the sorcery of Conrad, who strove to make the reader hear, feel, and, above all, see; by Hemingway's icebergs, and Stein's combustible connections of unconnectable words and their ingrown images; by Joyce's bottomless streams;

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by Faulkner's crisscrossing legends held together by the wooden harmony of verbena and the sycamore tree.

But Danilo Kiš's crime, of which he was accused in his native Yugoslavia, was not lyricism, was not that he imported poetry into the robust genre to the point where, as Joseph Brodsky observed, the chapters of his first book, *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*, could be "read and appreciated separately as individual poems." The crime of which Kiš was accused was, rather, plagiarism.

After the publication of *Boris Davidovich* in 1976, the collective wisdom of the Yugoslav Writers' Union put together a list of authors whom Kiš had allegedly plagiarized: their plots, their themes, even their styles. The list included Joyce and Koestler, Solzhenitsyn and Karl Stajner, Nadezhda Mandelstam and others; and it was to serve as a stake of ideological wrath at which to burn Kiš and his work. *Treba li spaliti Kiša?* (if my Serbian serves me right, "Is Kiš To Be Burned?") is the title of a volume compiled by the critic Krivokapić that assembled reviews, readers' letters, statements, interviews, and "scholarly" analyses of Kiš's pernicious dirge for the victims of Dzugashvilli. In the history of the literatures of the empire (no longer evil, you say? what's your epithet?) it is by no means a unique collection, though many similar "critical" campaigns remain uncollected.

Kiš certainly did not plagiarize. If we give his ferocious detractors the benefit of a doubt, and concede to them that they were moved by the uncontrollable anger that truth tends to arouse in those who, for dark reasons, are hysterically sensitive to it, then their criticism was based on a misunderstanding. There has never been a good writer who did not derive his inspiration from two sources, his life experience and the work of those who wrote before him. Naturals exploiting only what happened to them personally may be amusing, but they are extremely rare. And men of the library may be able to produce fictions that are, by all objective measurements, technically perfect, but they are stillborn imitations. Good fiction is always a marriage of *Dichtung* and *Wahrheit*, of poetry and truth; and the *Dichtung* may be someone else's, not only one's own.

Still, it has become a modern tradition for writers—especially, I suspect, since the emergence of Departments of Modern Literature, where learned men specialize in detecting influences—to feel uneasy about the beneficent shadows of ancestors, shadows that may lie on their lines heavily at first, but then disperse to leave shreds and traces. This uneasiness, when similarities of plot, theme, and style are pointed out and critically weighed, leads sometimes to counterattacks, to protestations of unfamiliarity with the alleged source of influence. Philip Roth claimed that he had never read *The Aspern Papers* when I pointed out to him the resemblance of that magic novella to the plot of *The Prague Orgy*, and I believe him. I was myself accused of plagiarizing *The Good Soldier Švejk* in my novel *The Tank Corps*, although I did not take the trouble of reading that "boring classic" (John Updike) until after the accusations.

Inevitably some writers decided to shed that uneasiness. Perhaps the notorious example of Shakespeare, the Great Borrower, accused in his lifetime of boasting of foreign feathers, helped to demonstrate that the idea of absolute originality is a shibboleth, a very modern notion (enhanced, certainly, by plagiarism lawsuits). When different men do the same thing, it is never the same thing. There were writers who, with great originality, canceled the moral difference (it was never an artistic difference) between borrowing and stealing, and blurred the differences between fiction, non-fiction, scholarship, diaries, letters, and so on. The great pioneer of this radical shift was Borges.

I have always admired the Argentinean reactionary for his unashamed predilection for the not quite reputable underbelly of belles lettres; for authors still widely considered "lesser," and even for those taken as serious objects of study only by students of pop culture. *The Book of Sand*, for instance, is permeated with the spirit of H. P. Lovecraft, whose grotesque visions it echoes; the mixing of real documents with imaginary ones was put to rather effective use by that insignificant American scribbler who died seven years before the publication of Borges's epoch-making *Ficciones* in 1944.

All this was what the Yugoslav Writers' Union failed to understand. Kiš once wrote that the history of fiction can be divided into pre-Borges and post-Borges. His novel under fire, *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*, marks the beginning of his own post-Borges period, which has culminated in *The Encyclopedia of the Dead*. The earlier fictions of this amazing writer were more or less in the sophisticated, mimetic tradition of realism. There was magic, to be sure, that attempted to "deceive" the reader into a "recognition" of reality as Kiš had lived it, but the work remained traditional realism nevertheless. With *Boris Davidovich*, Kiš entered definitively into the poetics of "documentary fiction" or, as he sometimes calls it, "faction." Its object is still reality; but reality sifted not just through

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experience, but also through secondary sources that, because they already contain the vision of somebody else, are once or several times removed from raw reality, and therefore imbued by imagination. Kiš's subject, in other words, is the mystery of others as a scenic route by which to approach the spectacle of human life.

Borgesians such as Kiš (and Poe) use two kinds of secondary sources: genuine documents and apocrypha, facts and "invented" facts, without indicating to the reader which is which. Sometimes this is because, when basing their "faction" on real events of history—such as the story of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which Kiš uses in his breathtaking reconstruction titled "The Book of Kings and Fools" in *The Encyclopedia of the Dead*—some crucial documents are simply missing, and so they make them up. At other times—and here the difference between fiction and "faction" escapes me—*all* the documents are fabricated, as in Kiš's delightful satire on literary overinterpretation, "Red Stamps with Lenin's Picture."

Among the several recurrent themes of Kiš's lovely text, perhaps the most prominent is the uniqueness, and therefore the equal importance, of every human being. The narrator of "Last Respects" has the following to say about a woman buried by sailors in a Hamburg cemetery: "She was unique, inimitable; she *was* a harbor whore." The uniqueness of the individual is a thought of which many would approve in theory. I have the impression, though, that it is held in bloody earnest, and most truly felt, only by those who are the surviving part of man-made holocausts, of the deadly experiments of modern social engineering.

The theme finds its most moving and politically eloquent expression in the title story of Kiš's book, where the female narrator on a visit to Sweden finds an incredible encyclopedia of all men and women who ever lived, from which only the "famous" are excluded:

> . . . this is what I consider the compilers' central message—nothing in the history of mankind is ever repeated, things that at first glance seem the same are scarcely even similar; each individual is a star unto himself, everything happens always and never, all things repeat themselves ad infinitum yet are unique. That is why the authors of the majestic monument to diversity that is *The Encyclopedia of the Dead* stress the particular; that is why every human being is sacred to them.

Let me conclude with another quotation. It condenses a great deal of this remarkable book: the reverence for ordinary men, the Serbian original's evocative close-up of common life, the quality of the translation:

> . . . names of teachers and friends, the boy's "finest years" against a backdrop of changing seasons, rain splashing off a happy face, swims in the river, a toboggan speeding down a snow-swept hill, trout fishing, and then—or, if possible, simultaneously—soldiers returning from the battlefields of Europe, a canteen in the boy's hands, a shattered gas mask abandoned on an embankment. And names, life stories. The widower Marki meeting his future wife Sofija Rebrača, a native of Komogovina, the wedding celebration, the toasts, the village horse race, pennants and ribbons flapping, the exchange-of-rings ceremony, singing and kolo-dancing outside the church doors, the boy dressed up in a white shirt, a spring of rosemary in his lapel.

This book brimming with death is brimming with life.

JOSEF ŠKVORECKÝ'S *Sins for Father Knox* has just been published by W. W. Norton.

Little Women

BY HERMIONE LEE

Cat's Eye
by Margaret Atwood

(Doubleday, 446 pp., $18.95)

Margaret Atwood is a time traveler. Her best-known early novel, *Surfacing*, takes her heroine back in time and space, from her current dislocations and amnesias to a sense of life as whole and clear as a glass egg. More recently, her famous dystopia, *The Handmaid's Tale*, goes forward to a horrifying vision in the near-future of a fundamentalist incarceration of women. At the end of the tale, this future time is suddenly perceived as a distant moment in a long-vanished history. The effect is at once chilling and serene. Her last volume of poems, *Interlunar*, has one called "Precognition" that begins: "Living backwards means only / I must suffer everything twice," and concludes: "I would rather cut myself loose / from time."

Elaine Risley, the narrator of Atwood's remarkable new novel *Cat's Eye*, is likewise reluctantly but inescapably time-conscious. "Nothing goes away," she begins. A painter, she wants her works to be "timeless," but "there is no such thing on earth": they are "drenched in time." Her brother, a brilliant physicist (whose story would make a fine novel in itself) has taught her that time is a dimension like space, not a linear chronology. Even the stars we see are "like echoes," memories of "something that happened millions of years ago," parts of time as much as of space.

Haunted by memories, Elaine tries to cut herself loose from time in all kinds of ways: by forgetting, by fainting (which makes time go on "without you"), by painting, by attempting suicide. Her novel is full of vertiginous fallings, black holes, and obliterations. But "nothing goes away." What she has to write—and paint—is a time journey that explains the past through the present, the present through the past; and all in the present tense.

Cat's Eye is thus an exceptional self-conscious and reiterative form of fictive autobiography, which circles around inside its time as if inside the transparent egg-shape—here, a glass marble—that Atwood so often uses. At one level the autobiography is a woman's realistic life story, which takes its admirable energy and specificity from the details of a 1940s and '50s Toronto childhood: a collage of smells, tastes, scrapbooks, food, clothes, and important small objects. Elaine's father is a botanist (like Atwood's—the resemblances, one suspects, don't end here), and the nomadic life he imposed on his family in his collectings of forest insects is marvelously evoked. When he takes a settled job, Elaine moves from an Edenic forest intimacy with her brother to

> a whole world of girls and their doings that has been unknown to me, and that I can be part of . . . without making any effort at all. I don't have to keep up with anyone, run as fast, aim as well, make loud explosive noises, decode messages, die on cue. I don't have to think about whether I've done these things well, as well as a boy. All I have to do is sit on the floor and cut frying pans out of the Eaton's Catalogue with embroidery scissors, and say I've done it badly. Partly this is a relief.

And partly not. Under Atwood's sharp satire on girls' codes is a nightmare of persecution, which is the ugly heart of the novel. Elaine becomes the victim of

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her "best friends," three girls, led by the implacable Cordelia, who monitor, punish, and emotionally degrade her—a relentless process culminating in a terrifying scene on a wooden bridge over a snowy ravine, a landscape that will haunt her forever. The girls all come from more repressive homes than her own—there is a gruesome description of one of their mothers, the puritanical and censorious Mrs. Smeath. But this fact is of no more use to Elaine, at the time, than her own mother's helpless distress (subtly implied) of what she senses is going on.

Atwood's account of this torture is horrifyingly brilliant, and will strike home to anyone who was ever involved in childhood gang warfare, whether as bullier or bullied. As Elaine moves away from it, the novel becomes more ordinary. Adolescent amnesia supervenes: Cordelia, now a messed-up teenager, even becomes her best friend. Their childhood relations are buried, Elaine becomes the stronger of the two, and at last rejects her. A more predictable story follows of growing up through art school in the '60s, a love affair with her Eastern European art teacher, and an immature marriage.

In the present, we see Elaine returning to Toronto for a retrospective of her work, organized by a fashionable women's gallery, "Sub-versions." Trendy, liberated Toronto, where the women are called Charna and wear abstract-art earrings and eat "take-out gourmet sprout-and-avocado sandwiches," is a long way from the genteel, repressed, provincial city of Elaine's childhood. The novel also reads as a sardonic version of Canadian history, where liberation does not necessarily mean progress. Contemporary speech feels alien to her. "*Futon, duvet*: this is how far we've come." "Now there's what they call a shopping complex, as if shopping was a psychic disease." "The first time I saw the word Reno in the real-estate I thought it meant the gambling resort. Language is leaving me behind."

This goes deeper than a cool satire on fashions in language. Elaine's childhood has made her an incurable alien. In the '60s, with a husband and small child, she treated "sisterhood" with baffled wariness. She didn't have the credentials ("I have not suffered enough, I haven't paid my dues"), the appetite for orthodoxy, or the willingness to translate her life into that language (where "*Pronatalists* is suddenly a bad word"). Her peripheral part in the first, pioneering all-women's show in a Toronto gallery is recorded with a caustic lack of euphoria, from the "unwaveringly plebeian" food, and the banner made of "bedsheets dyed to look as if someone's bled on them," to the ideologically upfront displays of condoms stuffed with tampons and quilts reading "UP YOUR MANIFESTO!" Later in the history of the women's movement (sardonically charted throughout the book), she is daunted by the energetic groups of lesbian feminists, who make her feel like "a quisling and a wimp." Returning to Toronto for her retrospective, she finds herself, still, a displaced person. The now very chic young feminists treat her (as in a good comical interview) like a dinosaur.

Atwood is clearly speaking of her own work and its accountability to feminism. And there is a tremendous irony in her disengagement. *Surfacing*, though it made some women readers queasy with its return to a biologically "natural," submerged, primitive femaleness, was celebrated, rightly, as a fiercely original feminist novel. *The Handmaid's Tale*, though, suggested that Atwood's radicalism might be turning, Lessing-like, toward a form of reaction. Those free women of the liberationist era, it seemed, were to be held responsible for the monstrous puritan backlash—which was being enforced by women, with the same kind of ferocious thoroughness that Cordelia brings to her torture of Elaine.

Now, it seems, the whole language of feminism has become irrelevant to the Atwood heroine. When Atwood gave a reading in London last month, the place was packed with a dedicated, very young, mostly female audience. It was a joyous and invigorating experience. But I couldn't help wondering, as they hung on their St. Margaret's every word, whether they had read the book yet, and what it would say to them. For it's apparent in *Cat's Eye* that such uncritical feminist enthusiasms are not interesting to her.

The true sources of Elaine's art are entirely other than her interpreters would have it. There *was* no feminist program. The novel's retrospective shows that Elaine's life and work have been irrevocably shaped by her childhood. The images that dominated the Cordelia phase—the ravine, the cat's eye, Mrs. Smeath—recur as the images of paintings. While the gallery owner describes her *Three Muses* as the continuation of "Risley's disconcerting deconstruction of perceived gender and its relationship to perceived power," we can see that they are life studies of the three (equally displaced) persons who were kind to her in her childhood, transfigured, as a reward, in the design of her painting.

The utopian feminist reading, which decodes progress and ideological endeavor from the work, is profoundly at odds with its real meanings. The paintings are private acts of revenge, gratitude, love and hatred. They come out of everything that shaped Elaine's life, from a place where the artist is not in charge:

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"Because I can no longer control these paintings, or tell them what to mean. Whatever energy they have comes out of me. I'm what's left over."

This powerful, intelligent, obdurate refusal to be simplified and co-opted has it pious elements. Elaine's Chagallian paintings sound too cutely allegorical; with titles like *The Virgin of Lost Things*, they have, for my taste, too many floating ladies in housecoats carrying globes or marbles. There's a risk of smugness when a famous woman writer turns herself into a famous woman painter, and analyzes her own works and their reception.

But the tendency toward self-importance is overridden by the novel's very powerful feelings of fear and anxiety, and by the transformation of those feelings into a lucid act of contemplation. Elaine as an art student prefers the medieval paintings because of their "calm arrested gestures." "What I want ... is pictures that seem to exist of their own accord. I want objects that breathe out light; a luminous flatness." To this end she starts painting in egg tempera, "the technique of monks," and copying different kinds of glass, with tiny brushes. Atwood's own prose—cool, steady, slightly flat, detailed and reflective—invests her terrible and painful subjects with that kind of "luminous flatness," and holds them as if suspended in glass—or in time.

HERMIONE LEE is senior lecturer at the University of York.

Razorback Tory

BY JOHN B. JUDIS

The Price of Empire by J. William Fulbright with Seth P. Tillman

(Pantheon, 243 pp., $17.95)

In the 1980s the most important foreign policy debate has been between neoconservative champions of global democracy and the Reagan Doctrine and a group of academic and policy intellectuals, dubbed the solvency school, who have warned that America's imperial ambitions are undermining its domestic economy. Far from being novel, however, this debate merely restates arguments that occurred more than two decades ago between supporters and foes of America's intervention in Vietnam. That era's leading Vietnam critic, then Senator William Fulbright, was the principal political exponent of the view that America was caught in a cycle of imperial overreach.

Fulbright's latest book, *The Price of Empire*, is both an attempt to apply this thesis to Reagan's America and a memoir of his Senate years. Unfortunately Fulbright doesn't entirely succeed at either task. His current arguments lack depth and cogency. His memories merely buttress those arguments. Fulbright, now 84, even portrays himself as an early critic of great power intervention. ("I may have absorbed an attitude toward big powers and big countries that has its roots in my Arkansas cultural background," he writes.) But what is interesting about Fulbright is the degree to which he changed his views in office. When Fulbright became a senator during World War II, he was a champion of the American Century. When he left 30 years later, after years as the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he was its foremost critic.

The son of a wealthy businessman, Fulbright was raised in Fayetteville, the site of the University of Arkansas. After quarterbacking the Razorback football team, he went to Oxford on a Rhodes scholarship, where he studied with R. B. McCallum, an admirer of Woodrow Wilson's internationalism. In 1939 Fulbright returned to Fayetteville to become the nation's youngest university president, only to be fired in 1941 after a rival of the Fulbright family won the governorship. In 1942 Fulbright ran successfully for Congress, and in 1944 he was elected to the Senate over the man who had fired him.

As a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, Fulbright embodied his Wilsonian idealism in the Fulbright Scholar exchange program, which he adroitly steered through Congress in 1946. He also backed all the major cold war initiatives, from the Truman Doctrine in Greece through the Korean War. In 1954 he urged American intervention in the event of a Communist victory in Indochina. In 1959 he criticized John Foster Dulles's successor Christian Herter for advocating troop cutbacks in Western Europe. In a Foreign Relations Committee hearing, Fulbright also warned Herter that "China's millions are ... the fingers of a hand manipulated by their determined and ruthless masters. We may expect that within foreseeable time the fingers will become a clenched fist prepared to smash all that stands in the path of China's domination of the Asian reaches." And in his 1963 book, *Prospects for the West*, written during the Kennedy administration, Fulbright exulted in American pre-eminence in "world power and responsibility."

But even during Fulbright's cold war days, he strayed from the consensus. As the historian Eugene Brown argues, Fulbright's support for the cold war was based on a kind of "economic realpolitik," rather than on fear of a worldwide communist conspiracy. He saw "imperialist Russia" rather than "communism" as America's enemy. He worried about the Soviet Union cutting off oil supplies from the Mideast, not about Cominform agents recruiting State Department officials. He despised Joseph McCarthy. In February 1954, Fulbright was the only senator to oppose funding McCarthy's committee, and later that year, as he explains in *The Price of Empire*, he wrote the censure resolution that Vermont Senator Ralph Flanders sponsored.

Fulbright believed that the United States should contain Soviet and Chinese communism, but he did not infer an unbridgeable gap between nations from ideological differences. He foresaw a "gradual adjustment" between West and East through negotiations. He also drew a distinction between Third World nationalism and communism. When the United States withdrew its funding for the Aswan Dam in 1956, Fulbright criticized Dulles for not recognizing "that Egyptian nationalism was a powerful force which could, if recognized for what it was and carefully handled, be directed toward political freedom instead of communism." He complained that because of "the fear of the deviltry of communism, we have cast ourselves indiscriminately in the role of the defender of the status quo throughout the world."

Fulbright distinguished between nationalists like Egypt's Nasser and Communists like Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh. But he also did not regard self-described communist states as immutably set in a pattern of antagonism toward the West. Land, factories, national rivalries were real. Communism was an evanescent epi-

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phenomenon. This view, which lay submerged in Fulbright's thought during the '50s, became the foundation of his dissent in the '60s.

In 1959 Fulbright became chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He was highly supportive of the administration during the Kennedy and first Johnson years, but even then there were two occasions when Fulbright challenged predominant ideas. In 1961 he counseled Kennedy not to invade Cuba. "The Castro regime is a thorn in the flesh; but it is not a dagger in the heart," Fulbright wrote in a memo that reflected his own realpolitik view of Cuban communism. In 1962, on the other hand, Fulbright supported the blockade, and even advised an invasion of Cuba, because he viewed the Soviet missiles as a direct threat to the American mainland.

After Kennedy stood off the Soviet Union during the missile crisis and then negotiated the nuclear test-ban treaty, Fulbright believed that the cold war could finally be resolved. In *Old Myths and New Realities*, based on his speeches of 1964, he asserted that these events had "profoundly altered . . . the character of the cold war." There had occurred an "implicit repudiation by both sides of a policy of 'total victory.' " Fulbright called for further negotiations with the Soviet Union and recognition of China.

Fulbright's first major break with Johnson did not come over Vietnam, but over the invasion of the Dominican Republic. Fulbright charged that the administration, by ousting social democrat Juan Bosch, had actually promoted the cause of communism. "The movement of the future in Latin America is social revolution," Fulbright said in September 1965. "The question is whether it is to be Communist or democratic revolution and the choice which the Latin Americans make will depend in part on how the United States uses its influence." But even in opposing the Dominican invasion, Fulbright was merely making a point that would be reiterated by liberal Democrats in the 1970s: that the American Century could best be preserved by supporting, rather than opposing, left-wing nationalism.

He was arguing about means rather than ends. It was his dissent over Vietnam that led him to question the ends of policy. Fulbright initially backed the American intervention in Vietnam; he shepherded Johnson's Gulf of Tonkin resolution through the Senate. But in January 1966, Fulbright began a series of hearings on the Vietnam War that would place him tentatively, and then resolutely, outside administration policy. On Vietnam, Fulbright brought to bear the political framework that he had slowly developed during the '50s and early '60s. He refused to see the war itself as part of a monolithic Communist offensive. He argued that Vietnamese communism could evolve into a kind of Tito-style nationalism that would benefit neither the Soviet Union nor China. "American interests are better served by supporting nationalism than by opposing communism," Fulbright contended. "When the two are encountered in close association it is in our interest to accept a communist government rather than to undertake the cruel and all but impossible tasks of suppressing a genuinely national movement."

In *The Arrogance of Power* (1966), Fulbright took the argument a step further. He abandoned altogether the cold war framework of analysis, and imputed similar global interests to the United States and the Soviet Union. "The United States is a conservative power in the world in the sense that most of its vital interests are served by stability and order," Fulbright wrote. "Russia can now properly be regarded as a conservative power in international relations, as a nation whose stake in the status quo is a far more important determinant of her international behavior than her philosophical commitment to world revolution."

Fulbright argued that the United States was beginning to suffer the fate of Rome, Spain, Britain, and other past imperial powers. "Having done so much and succeeded so well, America is now at that historical point at which a great nation is in danger of losing its perspective on what exactly is within the realm of its power and what is beyond it. Other great nations, reaching this critical juncture, have aspired to too much, and by overextension of effort have declined and fallen." Fulbright made the argument that would later be credited to Paul Kennedy and the solvency school: by attempting to preserve and extend its empire, the United States was undermining the basis of its imperial power.

Fulbright continued to support international organizations as a means of adjudicating disputes between nations, but now he rejected the Wilsonian attempt to export American democracy. His analysis was more realistic, and even more conservative, than his earlier views. He no longer advanced the liberal-utopian theory that countries like the Dominican Republic, if allowed to evolve naturally, would eventually become American-style democracies. He believed that unless these countries became a direct threat to the American mainland, their form of government was not worth fretting about. Of course, Fulbright did not originate this analysis of imperial decline, nor the proposal to limit American global aims. He was influenced by Walter Lippmann (whose 1947 columns on the cold war were the first statement of the solvency school), by Hans Morgenthau, by the post-1947 George Kennan. But Fulbright did more than anyone to popularize this analysis, to make it part of contemporary political debate.

Likewise, Fulbright was not the strongest Senate opponent of the Vietnam War. Oregon's Wayne Morse voted against the Tonkin Gulf resolution, and Morse and Alaska's Ernest Gruening were far more outspokenly critical of administration policy. But through his hearings and his own statements, Fulbright did more than anyone to legitimate opposition to the war. Not surprisingly, Fulbright was later identified with liberal Democrats, and even with the party's left wing. But he was never a conventional liberal.

His position on race, for example, was closer to the Ku Klux Klan than to civil rights Democrats. His views on exporting American democracy more closely resembled those of the Republican Robert Taft than the Democrat George McGovern. Like Kennan and Lippmann, Fulbright was a Tory in his political sensibilities, far more at home with Hamilton and Burke (whom he quotes repeatedly) than with Jefferson or Rousseau. With his arrival in the Senate, Fulbright made no secret of his disdain for Jeffersonian and Jacksonian democracy. The dilemma of democratic thought, Fulbright said in 1963, was "to reconcile the irrefutable evidences of human weakness and irrationality, which modern history has so abundantly provided, with a political philosophy whose very foundation is the assumption of human goodness and reason." The development of foreign policy is hampered, Fulbright argued, by "the durable myth of Jacksonian democracy, the view that any literate citizen can do almost any job and that a democracy can do without a highly trained administrative elite." From his first days in Congress, Fulbright advocated replacing the federal system with a parliamentary system in which the national leader is chosen by party officials rather than by the populace.

His most repellent political position, of course, was his support for racial segregation. He voted against civil rights bills, and even signed Richard Russell's Southern Manifesto urging states to resist *Brown* v. *Board of Education*. (The title chapter of Fulbright's celebrated *Old*

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Myths and New Realities was based on a speech that Fulbright gave during the Southern filibuster against the 1964 Civil Rights Act.) In *The Price of Empire*, Fulbright explains his opposition to civil rights as the political price he had to pay to stay in office and serve as chair of the Foreign Relations Committee. But Fulbright's support for racial segregation also reflected what was most retrograde about his conservatism: he regarded racial prejudice as a kind of lower-class affliction that was best ignored. In explaining his stand, he would often repeat what he said in 1946 at the University of Chicago:

> The average legislator early on in his career discovers that there are certain interests, or prejudices, of his constituents that are dangerous to trifle with. Some of these prejudices may not be of fundamental importance to the welfare of the nation, in which case he is justified in humoring them even though he may disapprove.

In his new book, Fulbright rehearses his earlier arguments, even taking some passages straight out of his previous books. The analysis of the Carter and Reagan years is not that telling. He goes overboard in blaming the United States for the continuation of the cold war: for instance, in attributing the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to Jimmy Carter's rejection of Leonid Brezhnev's arms proposals in Europe, and in denying the Reagan administration any credit for the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Fulbright also devotes an unsettling chapter to American policy toward Israel. His proposal for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is similar to that of Israeli doves and Palestinian moderates, but there is a real disingenuousness to his analysis of American policy. Fulbright endorses the canard that American policy is completely dictated by the pro-Israel lobby, a position that has allowed Arab governments to maintain cordial relations with American administrations while condemning the alleged power of American Jewry. At the same time Fulbright conveniently neglects to mention the fact that after he left the Senate he became one of Saudi Arabia's most important lobbyists.

And yet in his view of recent history Fulbright is generally correct. He, not Jeane Kirkpatrick, has been vindicated about the course of Third World Marxism. Third World Marxism has proved evanescent. In countries like China, Cuba, and Vietnam, American intransigence has played a part in perpetuating its hold. And the converse has also been true. Western friendliness toward China helped speed its abandonment of dogmatic Leninist credos. As Fulbright notes, countries like China will not necessarily become American-style democracies or American-style market systems, but many will evolve in the direction pioneered four decades ago by Tito's Yugoslavia.

In *The Price of Empire*, Fulbright distinguishes between the "cold war school, which remains wedded to the belief that the Soviet Union is riven by ideological zealotry," and "the détente school," which bases "its observations on Soviet *behavior* rather than doctrine," and "contends that, at least since Stalin's time, Soviet foreign policy has been pragmatic rather than messianic." Fulbright has been vindicated here, too. Gorbachev's emergence marks the midpoint, rather than the beginning, of Soviet willingness to deal with the United States and to recast the country's collectivist legacy.

Fulbright calls once more for the United States to turn away from its cold war obsession toward more pressing economic concerns. "At this stage the Russians are not the primary threat to our national security," Fulbright writes. "The primary threats are the damage to our economy caused by huge budget and trade deficits and the disarray of our political system." This is an odd message for a man who has spent his entire life pondering cold war foreign policy, but it could be his most important contribution to American politics.

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CORRECTION

Credit for the photograph of Andy Warhol, inadvertently omitted in our March 27 issue, should have gone to Fred W. McDarrah.

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

that "admirable manliness." But a man who is honestly self-assured doesn't need to be terminally defensive. Bigoted anger is easy enough to understand; it is hard to be self-assured and tolerant in the face of a threatening world even without a "redneck's" heritage. But it doesn't need support. It's also a myth that closed communities produce strong social character. Even if they are fairly egalitarian within, they will naturally be resistant to change around them. Fine, in a world where they can be isolated. Doesn't work any longer in this one.

ALLAN AVERY
Kirkland, Washington

TRB *continued from page 4*

about it, when it comes to the founding fathers of the country: if you read that about the militia, the way it was spelled out in the definition of it at the time it was put there, the Second Amendment was sold as everyone could have firearms or guns in their home, because they'd just gone through a deal with their good friends across the pond that wanted to disarm everyone. So they were never going to get caught in that situation again. And today people try to come along and say, 'If you belong to the National Guard, why then fine and dandy.' But everyone cannot belong to the National Guard."

I know, it's unfair to quote this fellow, even if he is president of the NRA. Actually, though, Joe Foss is a delight compared with the sinister, well-coiffed smoothies the gun lobby usually trots out. What's especially maddening about these people is the way they constantly shift the ground under their arguments.

One minute they're saying assault rifles should be legal because they're "sporting weapons" used for hunting and target shooting. The next minute they're saying the fundamental purpose of the Second Amendment is to provide a safeguard against a potentially tyrannical state—i.e., to permit people to use guns to overthrow the government by force and violence, should that become necessary (a purpose for which assault rifles, to say nothing of machine guns, tanks, and missiles, are far better suited than .22s). One minute they're saying Teflon cop-killer bullets are no longer a problem because they've been banned (over the NRA's protests, by the way). The next minute they're saying banning handguns won't do a thing to keep criminals from getting hold of them. One minute they're spending millions to kill or cripple a proposed gun control law in some state that has no such laws. The next minute they're saying that the failure of some neighboring state's laws to keep guns out proves gun control can't work.

"We don't need a whole lot more assault rifles on our streets right now," William Bennett observed dryly the other day. If enough people agree with him this time, drug dealers will be reduced to the indignity of using "legitimate sporting weapons" to blow away each other, the police, and unlucky bystanders. That would be good, though not good enough. Guns, "sporting" or unsporting, kill people. Maybe we should just forget about it, and ban gubs instead.

HENDRIK HERTZBERG

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Days of Whine and Reruns

AS A VICTIM OF THE 1989 FLU season, I recently had a chance to sample what daytime TV has to offer. It wasn't a pretty sight. On my first day at home, having made the great migration from bed to couch, I checked the TV listings and found " 'Sally Jessy Raphael.' Scheduled: facial deformities. (1 hr.)" There was also " 'Live—Regis and Kathie Lee.' Scheduled: singer Rosemary Clooney . . . breast cancer victims' husbands." I decided to pass on the TV. By the second day, however, boredom had set in, so I settled on my childhood strategy of watching old reruns. "I Love Lucy" and "Leave It to Beaver" had been in syndication when I was in grammar school, and they now brought back fond memories of spending a day home with the chicken pox, with mom carting in the ginger ale and soda crackers. In rerun world there are no facial deformities, cancers, or crooners. It's perfect flu-viewing. Loading on the blankets, I burrowed a peep hole to the TV, and then dozed to the sounds of perfect-worlddom.

BUT EVERY TEN MINUTES, NIRvana would be shattered by the cacophony of daytime TV commercials, which are increasingly bizarre. There's car insurance for even the most reckless, Visa cards for the most delinquent. Then there's the ad featuring a young fellow waiting for his friends to come and watch the Big Game on his new TV. How did he get the money? Well, Pharmakinetics will pay ambitious young men up to $1,000 to test the absorption rates of new drugs—on themselves, that is. Like the world of '50s sitcoms, commercials these days are anything but gender-blind. Men learn to be mechanics, women train to be nurses' aides. Men have a career in data entry, women through the Washington School for Secretaries. Men worry about hair loss, women about weight gain. Luckily, just when I was getting distraught about all this, Wally and the Beav returned to the screen and set my mind at ease.

"WOMANIZING" TURNED OUT TO be the least of John Tower's worries, but its linguistic revival may be one of the Tower affair's most unfortunate contributions to public dialogue. One reason this word seems so offensive is because in this case it's used to describe the activities of a man charitably described by the comedian Jay Leno as "Yoda with a bad haircut." The idea of Tower blithely fondling his way around town is enough to make the skin crawl. But more offensive in general is that the verb "to womanize," which literally means "to make effeminate," reduces women to the proverbial putty in men's hands. Most grating of all, however, is that no equivalent term exists to describe the behavior of the woman who chooses to make men more manly. There are pejorative ones, to be sure, but none that so flatters the subject and subjects the object. I propose "masculate," as in "Cleopatra masculated Marc Antony," or, to be more up to date, "Margo Adams masculated Wade Boggs." The latter seems particularly appropriate, because the Red Sox slugger's hitting apparently improved whenever he knew that Adams was attending his games sans underwear; she was inspiring him to be more of a man, or at least more of a player.

NO DEMOCRAT HAS MADE IT TO the White House since I've been old enough to vote, so when I had the chance to attend an inaugural ball three months ago, I figured I should take what I could get. As my cab pulled up to the Convention Center I saw a long line of minks stretching out along its walls. Strike one for egalitarianism, I thought as I edged into line wearing my somewhat more humble outer garment. Pressed into the woman in front of me, my mouth full of mink, I wondered, "No new taxes?" Why not? These people could all do with a little less. In fact, make it a flat tax on the rich, not a percentage. That way it would be nice and regressive, with the rich rich paying proportionately less than the poor rich, which would leave the rich rich with more to trickle down and thus stimulate the poor rich to work harder. Or something like that.

TNR'S OFFICE IS IN THE GRIPS OF an NCAA basketball pool, and many of us have our money on Georgetown taking the tournament. But win or lose on the court, one poll has shown that Georgetown basketball coach John Thompson may yet succeed in defeating Proposition 42, which requires that a high school basketball player have a 2.0 grade point average and score a total of 700 or higher on the SAT to get an NCAA scholarship. Thompson is much admired because he seems genuinely intent on helping his players—and black youths in general—make something of their lives. But I don't see how fighting Prop. 42 accomplishes this goal. If a student is doing so poorly that he can't meet Prop. 42's modest academic requirements, letting him into a top school won't help. Once he's on the team, all the practices, games, and road trips will take him away from the one thing that he really needs to do, which is study.

EVEN IF THOMPSON WINS HIS PROtest, that won't help those poor kids of any color who can't play collegiate-level basketball. Thompson is just trying to do his bit within his sphere, but his sphere doesn't encompass very many of the inner-city poor. If Thompson thinks SATs are culturally biased, he should present his case to the school's administration and to the alumni. They could form a more powerful front for not only SAT reform, but for more federally sponsored grants for those underprivileged kids who do have lower grades and scores but nonetheless deserve a shot at a good school. Thompson and his supporters seem to think that coaches and sports programs around the country will care for their student athletes as much as Thompson cares for his. But coaches aren't lining up behind him solely out of concern for underprivileged players. Their support probably owes more to the prospect of losing star players and national TV spots. Ultimately, Thompson and his controversial stand are in the news because his team is something that many consider worth getting at any cost—a winner.

I WAS IN A BOOKSTORE ONE night at the height of the furor over Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. While waiting in the cashier's line, I overheard two sales clerks talking about a troublesome patron. One ended by saying, "I should have taken his bag—he looked like one of those who'd carry a bomb," as the other laughed. They were talking about someone who they thought was of Persian descent and who apparently was carrying a shopping bag. Now, the Ayatollah issuing death threats is a good reason to develop a bad attitude toward the Ayatollah, but not toward people who simply "look" Iranian. I doubt if most people can tell the difference between an Iranian and a Afghani. And what does a Muslim look like? Even if you could tell the difference, this is the United States, where differences like that shouldn't matter, even—and especially—during times of tension. Not only are the vast majority of Iranian-Americans and Iranian immigrants decent people who are just as terrified of a bomb as the next person. They also have just as much right to be an ass as the next person, with no special recriminations.

LEONA HIRAOKA ROTH

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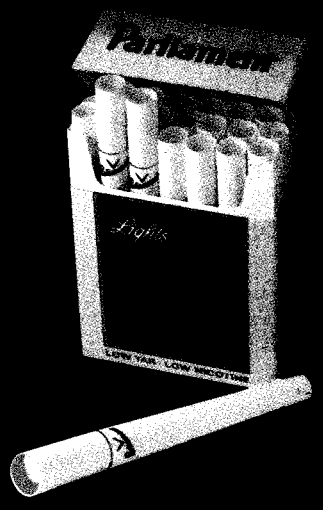

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